The THREE KINGDOMS

三國演義

VOLUME 3
Welcome the Tiger

The epic Chinese tale of loyalty and war
in a dynamic new translation

LUO GUANZHONG

Translated by YU SUMEI
Edited by RONALD C. IVERSON

The THREE KINGDOMS
VOLUME 3

Welcome the Tiger

LUO GUANZHONG

Translated by YU SUMEI

Edited by RONALD C. IVERSON

TUTTLE Publishing
Tokyo | Rutland, Vermont | Singapore

Published by Tuttle Publishing, an imprint of Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

www.tuttlepublishing.com

Copyright © 2014 Ronald C. Iverson

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data in process

ISBN: 978-1-4629-1439-5 (ebook)

17 16 15 14 5 4 3 2 1 1403MP
Printed in Singapore

Distributed by

North America, Latin America & Europe
Tuttle Publishing
364 Innovation Drive
North Clarendon,
VT 05759-9436 U.S.A.
Tel: 1 (802) 773-8930
Fax: 1 (802) 773-6993
info@tuttlepublishing.com
www.tuttlepublishing.com

Asia Pacific
Berkeley Books Pte. Ltd.
61 Tai Seng Avenue #02-12
Singapore 534167
Tel: (65) 6280-1330
Fax: (65) 6280-6290
inquiries@periplus.com.sg
www.periplus.com

Japan
Tuttle Publishing
Yaekari Building, 3rd Floor
5-4-12 Osaki, Shinagawa-ku
Tokyo 141 0032
Tel: (81) 3 5437-0171
Fax: (81) 3 5437-0755
sales@tuttle.co.jp
www.tuttle.co.jp

TUTTLE PUBLISHING® is a registered trademark of Tuttle Publishing, a division of Periplus Editions (HK) Ltd.

Contents

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE
Hua Tuo Performs Surgery on Guan Yu's Injured Arm
Lu Meng Crosses the River in a White Robe

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX
Xu Huang Fights a Great Battle on the Mian River
Guan Yu Retreats to Maicheng in Defeat

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SEVEN
Guan Yu's Ghost Visits Jade Spring Mountain
Cao Cao Is Possessed in Luoyang

CHAPTER SEVENTY-EIGHT
Treating Cao Cao, Hua Tuo Dies in Prison
On His Deathbed Cao Cao Leaves His Last Words

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE
Cao Pi Presses His Brother Zhi to Improvise Poems
Liu Feng Is Executed for Failing to Rescue His Uncle

CHAPTER EIGHTY
Emperor Xian of Han Is Deposed by Cao Pi
Liu Bei Claims to be the True Successor of Han

CHAPTER EIGHTY-ONE
Zhang Fei Is Assassinated
To Avenge His Younger Brothers Liu Bei Goes to War

CHAPTER EIGHTY-TWO
Sun Quan Receives Nine Gifts after Submitting to Wei
Liu Bei Rewards His Officers and Men in His War with Wu

CHAPTER EIGHTY-THREE
Liu Bei Gets His Sworn Enemies at Xiaoting
Lu Xun Is Made Commander to Guard the Yangtze

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FOUR
Lu Xun Burns His Enemy's Seven Hundred Li of Camps
Zhuge Liang Cleverly Plans the Eight Arrays

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FIVE
Liu Bei Leaves His Son in Zhuge Liang's Care
Zhuge Liang Peacefully Settles the Five Attacks

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SIX
Qin Mi Engages Zhang Wen in a Philosophical Debate
Xu Sheng Uses Fire to Destroy Cao Pi's Army

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SEVEN
Zhuge Liang Raises an Army to Subdue the Mans
The King of the Mans Initially Suffers Defeat

CHAPTER EIGHTY-EIGHT
Crossing the Lu River Meng Huo Is Recaptured
Failing in His Trick Meng Huo Is Captured a Third Time

CHAPTER EIGHTY-NINE
Zhuge Liang Designs the Fourth Successful Ruse
Meng Huo Is Captured a Fifth Time

CHAPTER NINETY
Driving off Giant Beasts, Zhuge Liang Scores a Sixth Victory
Rattan Armor Burned, Meng Huo Is Captured for the Seventh Time

CHAPTER NINETY-ONE
Zhuge Liang Offers Sacrifices at the Lu River and Leads His Army Homeward
The Marquis of Wu Proposes an Attack on Wei in His Memorial

CHAPTER NINETY-TWO
Zhao Yun Heroically Slays Five Wei Officers
Zhuge Liang Cleverly Seizes Three Cities

CHAPTER NINETY-THREE
Jiang Wei Submits to Zhuge Liang
Zhuge Liang Reviles Wang Lang to Death

CHAPTER NINETY-FOUR
Zhuge Liang Smites the Qiang Troops in a Snowstorm
Sima Yi Moves Swiftly to Capture Meng Da

CHAPTER NINETY-FIVE
Ignoring Wang Ping's Advice, Ma Su Loses Jieting
Playing the Lute, Zhuge Liang Repulses Sima Yi

CHAPTER NINETY-SIX
Weeping in Sorrow, Zhuge Liang Puts Ma Su to Death
Cutting His Hair, Zhou Fang Tricks Cao Xiu

CHAPTER NINETY-SEVEN
Zhuge Liang Proposes to Renew the Attack on Wei
Jiang Wei Defeats Wei by Means of a Forged Letter

CHAPTER NINETY-EIGHT
Pursuing the Shu Army, Wang Shuang Is Slain
Seizing Chencang, Zhuge Liang Wins a Victory

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE
Zhuge Liang Wins a Great Victory
Sima Yi Drives His Army into Shu

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED
Cao Zhen Is Defeated in a Raid on His Camp by the Shu Army
Zhuge Liang Shames Sima Yi in Front of an Array

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ONE
Leaving Longshang Zhuge Liang Disguises Himself as a God
Hurrying to Sword Pass Zhang He Falls into a Trap

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWO
Sima Yi Occupies the Wei Bridge over Beiyuan
Zhuge Liang Constructs Wooden Oxen and Running Horses

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THREE
Sima Yi Is Trapped in Gourd Valley
Zhuge Liang Invokes His Star on Wuzhang Plain

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR
A Great Star Falls as Zhuge Liang Returns to Heaven
A Wooden Statue Frightens Sima Yi

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE
Zhuge Liang Leaves a Plan in the Silk Bag
Cao Rui Obtains the Dew-Collecting Bronze Bowl

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SIX
Defeated, Gongsun Yuan Dies at Xiangping
Pretending Illness, Sima Yi Sets a Trap for Cao Shang

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN
Sima Yi Recovers Political Power
Jiang Wei Loses a Battle at Ox Head Hills

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT
Ding Feng's Swordsmen Win a Victory in the Snow
Sun Jun Executes a Murderous Plan at a Banquet

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINE
Jiang Wei Employs a Surprise to Defeat Sima Zhao
The Emperor of Wei Is Dethroned

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TEN
Wen Yang Drives Off a Mighty Host Single-handedly
Jiang Wei Wins a Major Victory Near the Tao River

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN
Deng Ai Outwits Jiang Wei
Zhuge Dan Raises an Army to Destroy Sima Zhao

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE
Yu Quan Dies Nobly to Rescue Shouchun
Jiang Wei Fights Fiercely to Seize Changcheng

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN
Ding Feng Designs a Plan to Slay Sun Chen
Jiang Wei Defeats Deng Ai in a Contest of Battle Formations

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN
Cao Mao Is Slain in His Carriage at South Gate
Jiang Wei Abandons His Supplies to Win a Battle

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN
The Second Ruler Listens to Slander and Recalls His Army
Jiang Wei Takes Command of the Cantonments to Escape Death

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN
Zhong Hui Divides His Army to Take Hanzhong
Zhuge Liang Makes an Appearance at Dingjun Hill

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN
Deng Ai Slips Through Yinping Pass
Zhuge Zhan Fights to the Death at Mianzhu

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN
Weeping at the Ancestral Temple, a Filial Prince Dies
Entering the West, Two Generals Fight for Merits

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN
A False Desertion Ends in a Vain Attempt
A Second Abdication Imitates the First

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY
Recommending Du Yu a Veteran Offers New Plans
Sun Hao Surrenders and the Three Kingdoms are Reunited

List of Main Characters

Cai Mao—brother-in-law of Liu Biao

Cao Cao (Cao Meng-de, A.D. 155–220)—prime minister to Emperor Xian, controls the real power of the state; later created Duke of Wei, Prince of Wei and posthumously, Emperor Wu of Wei Dynasty

Cao Hong—cousin of Cao Cao and senior officer under him

Cao Pi (A.D. 187–226)—second son of Cao Cao, later first emperor (Emperor Wen) of Wei Dynasty, which he established in A.D. 220

Cao Ren—cousin of Cao Cao and senior officer under him

Cao Rui—son of Cao Pi, later Emperor Ming of Wei

Cao Shuang—son of Cao Zhen, enemy of Sima Yi

Cao Zhen—senior officer of Wei

Cao Zhi (Cao Zi-jian, A.D. 192–232)—favorite son of Cao Cao and a famed poet

Chen Deng—advisor to Lu Bu but later plots his destruction

Chen Gong—chief advisor to Lu Bu

Chen Lin—notable scholar, first served as advisor to Yuan Shao but later surrendered to Cao Cao

Chen Wu—senior officer of Wu

Cheng Pu—senior officer of Wu

Cheng Yu—advisor to Cao Cao

Deng Ai—commander of the forces of Wei after Sima Yi

Dian Wei—bodyguard to Cao Cao

Diao Chan (Sable Cicada)—singing girl at Wang Yun's house, who helps her master destroy Dong Zhuo; concubine of Lu Bu

Ding Feng—senior officer of Wu

Dong Cheng—general of Han and relative to the imperial house, who receives the secret edict from Emperor Xian to assassinate Cao Cao

Dong Zhuo—governor of Hedong, later establishes himself as prime minister of Han; set up Emperor Xian in place of his brother, Emperor Shao, in order to build his own power

Emperor Shao (Liu Bian)—son of Emperor Ling and Empress He, deposed and murdered by Dong Zhuo

Emperor Xian (Liu Xie)—brother of Emperor Shao, a puppet ruler controled by his ministers; deposed by Cao Pi in A.D. 220 (r. A.D. 189–220)

Empress Dowager He—mother of Emperor Shao, sister of He Jin; murdered by Dong Zhuo

Fa Zheng—Liu Zhang's official who helped Liu Bei acquire the rule of Shu

Feng Ji—advisor to Yuan Shao, enemy of Tian Feng

Gan Ning (Gan Xin-ba)—senior officer of Wu, famed for his bravery

Gao Shun—officer under Lu Bu

Gongsun Zan—patron of Liu Bei and one of the seventeen lords who join forces to wage war on Dong Zhuo; commits suicide after being destroyed by Yuan Shao

Guan Lu, famous sage

Guan Ping—adopted son of Guan Yu, killed by Sun Quan

Guan Xing—elder son of Guan Yu

Guan Yu (Guan Yun-chang, A.D. ?–219)—sworn brother of Liu Bei and Zhang Fei, Lord of Hanshou, famed for his valor and rectitude; respected greatly by Cao Cao

Guo Jia (Guo Feng-xiao)—trusted advisor to Cao Cao

Guo Si—fellow rebel with Li Jue after the downfall of Dong Zhuo

Guo Tu—advisor to Yuan Shao and later to his eldest son Yuan Tan

Han Dang—senior officer of Wu

Han Sui—warrior from the northwest, sworn brother of Ma Teng

He Jin—brother of Empress Dowager He and commander of Han forces; murdered by eunuchs

Hua Tuo—famous physician who cures Zhou Tai and Guan Yu; killed by Cao Cao

Hua Xin—senior official under Cao Cao and Cao Pi, notorious for his cruelty toward Empress Fu

Huang Gai (Huang Gong-fu)—senior officer of Wu, whose false defection to Cao Cao plays a key role in the Battle of the Red Cliff

Huang Zhong (Huang Han-sheng)—veteran warrior, joins Liu Bei after the latter's seisure of Changsha

Huang Zu—commanding officer under Liu Biao

Ji Ling—commanding officer under Yuan Shu

Ji Ping—physician of Han court, killed by Cao Cao after failing to poison him

Jia Xu—resourceful strategist, advisor first to Li Jue and Guo Si, then to Zhang Xiu, and finally to Cao Cao

Jian Yong—advisor to Liu Bei

Jiang Gan—official under Cao Cao, an old friend of Zhou Yu's

Jiang Wei (Jiang Bo-yue)—successor to Zhuge Liang as commander-in-chief of Shu forces

Kan Ze—senior advisor of Wu, who delivers Huang Gai's false letter of defection to Cao Cao

Kong Rong—notable Han scholar, descendant of Confucius, Prefect of Beihai; later killed by Cao Cao for his outspokenness

Kuai Yue—advisor to Liu Biao

Lady Cai—second wife of Liu Biao, sister of Cai Mao

Lady Gan—wife of Liu Bei, mother of Liu Shan (A Dou)

Lady Liu—wife of Yuan Shao and mother of Yuan Shang

Lady Mi—wife of Liu Bei, sister of Mi Zhu and Mi Fang

Lady Sun—wife of Liu Bei and sister of Sun Quan

Li Dian—officer under Cao Cao

Li Jue—chief rebel after the downfall of Dong Zhuo

Liao Hua—officer of Shu under Guan Yu

Lin Tong—officer of Wu

Liu Bei (Liu Xuan-de, A.D. 161–223)—descendant of the imperial house, sworn brother of Guan Yu and Zhang Fei,

later Prince of Hanzhong and first ruler of the kingdom of Shu

Liu Biao (Liu Jin-sheng, A.D. 142–208)—Prefect of Jingzhou, who gives shelter to Liu Bei and leaves in his care his two sons, Liu Qi and Liu Zong

Liu Qi—elder son of Liu Biao; hated by his stepmother Lady Cai

Liu Shan (A Dou, A.D. 207–271)—eldest son of Liu Bei, second ruler of Shu (r. A.D. 223–263)

Liu Ye—senior advisor to Cao Cao

Liu Zhang—Governor of Yizhou, later overthrown by his kinsman Liu Bei

Liu Zong—younger son of Liu Biao; killed with his mother, Lady Cai, by Cao Cao

Lu Bu (Lu Feng-xian)—valiant warrior, adopted son first of Ding Yuan and later of Dong Zhuo, both of whom die at his hands; killed by Cao Cao

Lu Meng (Lu Zi-ming)—senior officer of Wu; succeeds Lu Su as commander-in-chief of forces

Lu Shang—chief counselor to King Wen of Zhou and his son King Wu, who founded the Zhou Dynasty

Lu Su (Lu Zi-jing)—chief advisor of Wu, successor to Zhou Yu as commander-in-chief; advocates alliance with Liu Bei against Cao Cao

Lu Xun (Lu Bo-yan)—son-in-law of Sun Ce; succeeds Lu Meng as commander-in-chief of Wu forces to foil Liu Bei's attack

Lu Zhi—Han general who commands an imperial force in the suppression of the Yellow Turban Uprising

Ma Chao (Ma Meng-qi)—son of Ma Teng, later one of Liu Bei's Five Tiger Generals

Ma Dai—cousin of Ma Chao, officer of Shu

Ma Liang—advisor to Liu Bei, brother of Ma Su

Ma Su (Ma You-chang)—advisor to Liu Bei, younger brother of Ma Liang; put to death after the fall of Jieting

Ma Teng—Han general, loyal to the House of Han; killed by Cao Cao

Man Chong—advisor to Cao Cao, who persuades Xu Huang to submit to Cao Cao

Meng Da—good friend of Fa Zheng and Zhang Song; assists Liu Bei in conquering Shu

Mi Fang—brother of Lady Mi and Mi Zhu, who fails to rescue Guan Yu and is later killed by Liu Bei

Mi Zhu—brother of Lady Mi and Mi Fang, loyal follower of Liu Bei

Pan Zhang—senior officer under Sun Quan

Pang De—formerly serves under Ma Chao but later joins Cao Cao; killed by Guan Yu

Pang Tong (Pang Shi-yuan, or Phoenix Fledgeling)—chief strategist in the Battle of the Red Cliff and later advisor to Liu Bei

Shen Pei—advisor to Yuan Shao, and later his youngest son Yuan Shang

Sima Yan—grandson of Sima Yi; first emperor of Jin Dynasty after forcing the abdication of Cao Huan, last emperor of Wei Dynasty

Sima Yi (Sima Zhong-da)—advisor to Cao Cao, father of Sima Zhao, who later overthrows Wei Dynasty and establishes Jin Dynasty

Sima Zhao—son of Sima Yi, father of Sima Yan

Sun Ce (Sun Bo-fu, A.D. 175–200)—eldest son of Sun Jian, brother of Sun Quan; enlarges the territory he inherits from his father east of the Yangtze River; later assassinated

Sun Jian (Sun Wen-tai, A.D. 155–191)—founder of Wu and father of Sun Ce and Sun Quan; killed by Liu Biao's men

Sun Qian—senior counselor to Liu Bei

Sun Quan (Sun Zhong-mou, A.D. 182–252)—second son of Sun Jian and brother of Sun Ce; succeeds them to be ruler of the land of Wu and later Emperor of Wu (r. A.D. 229–252)

Taishi Ci—valiant warrior of Wu

Tao Qian—Prefect of Xuzhou, who yields his district to Liu Bei

Tian Feng—advisor to Yuan Shao

Wang Ping—officer of Shu

Wang Yun—senior official of the Han court, who instigates the "chain" scheme to destroy Dong Zhuo, but is later killed by Li Jue and Guo Si

Wei Yan (Wei Wen-chang)—senior officer under Liu Bei, later commander of Hanzhong; distrusted by Zhuge Liang

Wen Chou—general under Yuan Shao, slain by Guan Yu

Xiahou Ba—son of Xiahou Yuan, cousin of Xiahou Dun

Xiahou Dun—senior officer in the service of Cao Cao

Xiahou Yuan—senior officer in the service of Cao Cao; later killed by Huang Zhong

Xu Chu—bodyguard of Cao Cao

Xu Huang—senior officer in the service of Cao Cao

Xu Sheng—senior officer of Wu

Xu You—advisor first to Yuan Shao and later to Cao Cao; killed by Xu Chu

Xun You—advisor to Cao Cao, nephew of Xun Yu

Xun Yu (Xun Wen-ruo)—senior advisor to Cao Cao

Yan Liang—general under Yuan Shao, slain by Guan Yu

Yang Feng—officer under Li Jue, but later leaves him to serve Emperor Xian; killed by Liu Bei

Yi Ji—advisor to Liu Biao first, but later joins Liu Bei, to whom he exposes Cai Mao's plot to harm him

Yu Fan—advisor to Sun Quan

Yu Jin—senior officer under Cao Cao

Yuan Shang—youngest son of Yuan Shao

Yuan Shao (Yuan Ben-chu, A.D. ?–202)—born into a family of high-ranking officials of Han; leader of a confederacy army against Dong Zhuo; rules four northern districts but is later destroyed by Cao Cao

Yuan Shu (Yuan Gong-lu, A.D. ?–199)—brother of Yuan Shao, assumes the title of emperor at Shouchun but is soon destroyed by Cao Cao

Yuan Tan—eldest son of Yuan Shao

Yue Jin—senior officer under Cao Cao

Zhang Ba—officer under Lu Bu

Zhang Bao—son of Zhang Fei

Zhang Fei (Zhang Yi-de, A.D. ?–221)—sworn brother of Liu Bei and Guan Yu; courageous warrior, fiery-tempered after drinking

Zhang He—senior officer under Yuan Shao but later joins Cao Cao

Zhang Liao (Zhang Wen-yuan)—formerly served under Lu Bu but later surrendered to Cao Cao; friend of Guan Yu

Zhang Lu—ruler of Hanzhong; later defeated by Cao Cao

Zhang Song—official of Shu, but secretly persuades Liu Bei to kill his old master and take his land

Zhang Xiu—one of the feudal lords

Zhang Zhao—chief counselor to Sun Quan

Zhao Yun (Zhao Zi-long)—warrior of unusual strength and resoucefulness; loyal follower of Liu Bei

Zhong Hui—commander of Wei

Zhong Yao—senior official of Wei

Zhou Tai—senior officer under Sun Quan

Zhou Yu (Zhou Gong-jin)—commander-in-chief of the forces of Wu, who directs the Battle of the Red Cliff against Cao Cao; rival of Zhuge Liang

Zhu Jun—Han general

Zhuge Jin—elder brother of Zhuge Liang, advisor to Sun Quan

Zhuge Ke—officer of Wu, son of Zhuge Jin

Zhuge Liang (Kongming, or Sleeping Dragon, A.D. 181–234)—hermit of Nangyang, later chief counselor to Liu Bei; his ingenious policy of uniting Wu to oppose Wei leads to the emergence of the balance of power among the three kingdoms of Wei, Shu, and Wu; his wisdom and military skill enable Liu Bei to set up his own rule

Zhuge Zhan—son of Zhuge Liang

CHAPTER SEVENTY-FIVE

Hua Tuo Performs Surgery on Guan Yu's Injured Arm

Lu Meng Crosses the River in a White Robe

At the sight of Guan Yu falling from his charger, Cao Ren led his men out of the city to follow up with an attack, but Guan Ping drove him off and escorted his father back to the camp. There the arrow was extracted, but its head had been poisoned and the poison had penetrated to the bone. The right arm, discolored and swollen, could not move.

Guan Ping, anxious for his father's health, said to the others, "If my father should lose his right arm, how can he ever fight? Let us withdraw to Jing zhou for the moment, where his wound can be treated." His proposal being accepted, he went with the others to see his father.

"What have you come for?" asked Guan Yu when they entered.

"General, you are wounded in the right arm," they replied. "We fear the excitement of battle might cause further injuries so we think it is better for the army to return to Jingzhou temporarily."

Guan Yu said angrily, “I’m on the point of taking the city, and if I succeed I must press forward to the capital and destroy that rebel Cao Cao, so that the rule of the Hans can be restored. Do you think I can endanger the whole campaign because of a slight wound? How dare you dishearten the army?”

Guan Ping and his colleagues fell silent and withdrew.

Seeing that their leader would not abandon the campaign and the wound showed no signs of healing, the officers inquired far and near for a good surgeon to attend their general.

One day, a stranger arrived in a small boat. Upon landing, he went straight to the gate of the camp and was led in to see Guan Ping. The visitor wore a square-cut cap and a loose robe. In his hand he carried a small black bag.

“I am Hua Tuo of Jiaojun,” he introduced himself. “I hear that General Guan is suffering from an arrow wound. As he is a true hero, I have come to cure him.”

“Aren’t you the surgeon who treated Zhou Tai?” asked Guan Ping.

“Yes, I am.”

Greatly pleased, Guan Ping at once took the doctor to see his father, followed by the other officers. He found him engaged in a game of wei qi with one of the advisors. In fact the general was feeling great pain in his right arm but, for fear of discouraging his men he tried to keep up an appearance of

being well. When Guan Ping told him that a doctor had come, he consented to see him.

So Hua Tuo was introduced and asked to take a seat. After tea was served, the doctor examined the injured arm.

“This was caused by an arrow,” said the doctor. “There is the poison of the blackhead plant in the wound, and it has penetrated to the bone. Unless the wound is treated immediately the arm will become useless.”

“What do you propose to do?” asked Guan Yu.

“I know how to cure the wound, but I fear you might be afraid of the remedy.”

“Even death is but a homeward journey to me. Am I likely to be afraid of your treatment?”

Then Hua Tuo said, “This is what I am going to do. In a quiet room I will erect a post with a big ring attached. I will ask you, sir, to insert your arm in the ring, and I will bind it firmly to the post. Then I will cover your head with a quilt so that you cannot see, and with a scalpel I will cut open the flesh right down to the bone. Then the poison will be scraped away. When that is done, I will dress the wound, sew it up with a suture, and there will be no further trouble. But I am afraid you might quail at the severity of the treatment.”

“Is that all?” Guan Yu said, smiling. “That’s easy. I don’t think the post and the ring are necessary.”

Then he ordered wine and refreshments to be brought in to entertain the doctor. After a few cups of wine the warrior extended his right arm for the operation while, with his other hand, he went on with his game of wei qi. Meanwhile, the doctor prepared his knife and called a lad to hold a basin beneath the injured limb to catch the blood that would drip from the wound.

"I am going to open the wound—do not be startled," warned Hua Tuo.

"Go ahead with your treatment," replied Guan Yu. "Do you take me for an ordinary person, afraid of pain?"

The surgeon then performed the operation. He found the bone much discolored, and he started to scrape it clean. Sih, sih, hissed the knife as it went over the surface of the bone. All those present covered their eyes in dread, turning quite pale, but Guan Yu went on with his game, drinking and eating or chatting and smiling, and there was no sign of pain on his face. Soon the basin was filled with blood.

When the wound had been cleansed, dressed, and sewn up, Guan Yu, laughing heartily, rose to his feet and said, "This arm is now as good as it ever was—there is no pain. Indeed, doctor, you are a marvel."

"I have been a doctor all my life," said Hua Tuo, "but I have never met such a patient as you, sir. You really are more like a god than human."

> There are physicians and surgeons,
> But good doctors are rarely found.

As for superhuman rivals, Guan had none,
So for holy touch in healing Hua Tuo stood alone.

As his wound was healed Guan Yu gave a luxurious banquet in honor of Hua Tuo. At the dinner the doctor cautioned: "General, although your wound is cured, you must still be careful. Within the next hundred days, do not let anger get the better of you, and then you will be as well as ever."

Guan Yu offered him a fee of a hundred liang of gold but the doctor refused to accept it, saying, "I have come to treat you because I admire you for your virtue. Do you think I expected a reward of money?" Leaving some prepared dressings for the wound, he departed.

Having captured Yu Jin and slain Pang De, Guan Yu became even more famous and more feared throughout the country. When he heard of the fate of his seven forces, Cao Cao hurriedly called together his advisors and consulted them upon what he should do.

Cao Cao said, "I have always known Yun-chang to be matchless in strategy and valor. Now that he possesses the vast area of Jing zhou, he is like a winged tiger. Pang De is no more; Yu Jin is his prisoner; and our men have lost their morale. If he should lead his army here, we would be in danger. I am thinking of moving the capital to another place to avoid him. What do you say?"

"No, this will not do," objected Sima Yi, rising to reply. "Yu Jin and the others were victims of the flood, not defeated in battle. Their losses do not really affect your great plans for our state. Now Sun Quan, who is no longer an ally of Liu

Bei's, will certainly be displeased with Guan Yu's victory. You can send an envoy into Wu to foment discord between them and ask Sun Quan to send his army to attack Guan Yu from the rear. Promise him that, when Guan Yu is subdued, you will obtain for him the land of the south as his fief. In this way you will relieve the siege of Fancheng."

This view was seconded by another official who said, "He is right. The envoy should be sent without loss of time. There is no need to move the capital or send an army."

Cao Cao took their advice and abandoned his own idea. But he was sad at the betrayal of Yu Jin and said to his officers, "Yu Jin followed me for thirty years, and I never thought he would betray me in the face of danger. Pang De was much more loyal to me than he was. Now apart from sending the letter to Wu I need another officer to face Guan Yu."

Hardly had he finished his words when an officer stepped forward and offered himself. It was Xu Huang. Cao Cao, very pleased, gave him 50,000 veterans. Lu Jian was appointed second-in-command, and the army was to march to Yangling Slope, where they would wait till support came from Wu.

Sun Quan fell in with Cao Cao's scheme as soon as he had read the latter's letter. He at once prepared a reply for the envoy to take back, and then gathered all his subordinates, both civil and military, for consultation. Zhang Zhao was the first to speak.

"We know Guan Yu has scored a tremendous victory recently, which has added greatly to his fame. Even Cao Cao wanted to move the capital rather than risk an attack. Now he

has turned to us for help because Fancheng is in imminent danger. But I doubt whether he will keep his promise when he has achieved his purpose."

Before Sun Quan could reply it was announced that Lu Meng had arrived in a boat from Lukou with a special message. He was at once called in and asked what that message was.

Lu Meng said, "Guan Yu is now away at Fancheng. This is our opportunity to attack Jingzhou."

"But I would like to seize Xuzhou," said Sun Quan. "What do you think?"

"Well, Cao Cao is far away in the north and too occupied to think of the east. Xuzhou is only guarded by a weak force and could be taken easily, but the lie of the land favors the use of an army rather than a navy. And even if you capture it, it will not be easy to hold. I think it is better to seize Jingzhou and so get control of the whole of the Yangtze. Then you can develop other schemes."

"My real desire was to attack Jingzhou, but I wished to hear what you would say about the other plan. Now, sir, I want you to seize Xuzhou as soon as possible and I will support you with reinforcements."

So Lu Meng took his leave and went back to Lukou. But soon he heard that beacon towers had been erected at short distances all along the river, and that the Jingzhou army was in readiness.

“If this is so, it will be hard to seize the city quickly,” said Lu Meng in alarm. “I have already advised my master to attack Jingzhou. What am I to do now?”

As he could find no way out, he pretended illness as an excuse for inaction, and sent someone to inform Sun Quan, who was very distressed at the news.

Then Lu Xun said, “I think this illness is feigned, not real.”

“If so, go and find out for me,” said Sun Quan.

Away went Lu Xun and speedily arrived at Lukou, where he saw Lu Men indeed in perfect health. Nor did his face bear any signs of recent illness.

“Our lord has sent me to inquire after your health,” said Lu Xun.

“My slight indisposition should not cause you the inconvenience of inquiring,” replied Lu Meng.

“Our lord has placed a very heavy responsibility on your shoulders, but you are not making the best use of the opportunity. What is the real cause of your distress?”

Lu Meng sat gazing at his visitor a long time without replying.

“I have a little remedy,” said Lu Xun. “I wonder if it will cure you.”

Lu Meng dismissed the servants, and when the two were alone he said, “Please tell me what your remedy is.”

“Your ailment is simply due to the preparedness of the Jingzhou soldiers and the beacons along the river,” said Lu Xun, smiling. “I know a plan to keep the beacons from flaring and make the Jingzhou soldiers come to you with their hands tied. Will that cure you?”

“My friend, you speak as if you could see my innermost heart. Please tell me your scheme.”

“Guan Yu thinks himself too much of a hero for anyone to dare to face him, and his only anxiety is you. Now you can carry further your pretense of illness to actually resigning from this post so that another may be appointed. Let this man, your successor, humbly praise Guan Yu till he becomes so conceited that he will withdraw all the troops from Jingzhou to seize Fancheng. When Jingzhou is left undefended all we need is a small force and a clever ruse, and the city will fall into our hands.”

“What an excellent plan!” exclaimed Lu Meng.

Therefore Lu Meng pretended to be very ill and he gave Lu Xun his letter of resignation to take to Sun Quan. Lu Xun hastened back and explained the ruse to his master, who soon after called Lu Meng back, ostensibly for him to nurse his health. Lu Meng went to see Sun Quan, who discussed with him the matter of a successor for the post at Lukou.

Sun Quan said, “When Zhou Yu died he recommended Lu Su, who in turn proposed you. Now you must name a talented and well-known officer to succeed you.”

“If you choose a famous officer, Guan Yu will certainly be on his guard against him. Now Lu Xun is deep and farsighted, but he has no reputation. His appointment will not attract particular notice from Guan Yu. I think he is the most suitable person to be my successor.”

Sun Quan, delighted, promoted Lu Xun to the rank of general and commander-in-chief and sent him to defend Lukou in place of Lu Meng.

“I am young and inexperienced,” said Lu Xun. “I fear I am unequal to such a post.”

“Lu Meng has recommended you, and he ought to know best,” said Sun Quan. “Do not decline.”

So the appointment was made, and Lu Xun set out at once. When he had assumed charge of the cavalry, the infantry, and the marines, he immediately sent an envoy to see Guan Yu at Fancheng with his letter and expensive gifts, including fine horses, beautiful silk, and good wine.

At that time Guan Yu was resting from the effects of his wound and not conducting any military operations. Then came the news of the change of commander at Lukou and the arrival of the envoy with the letter and gifts from Lu Xun. The bearer was called in to see the great warrior.

“Your master lacks common sense to appoint that youth commander of the forces,” said Guan Yu, pointing at the messenger.

The messenger prostrated himself before Guan Yu and said, “General Lu sends you this letter and some presents, which he hopes you will accept, to congratulate you on your recent victory, and he wishes that our two houses could be friends.”

After Guan Yu read the letter, which was couched in most abject language, he threw back his head and laughed loud. He told his attendants to collect the gifts and sent the messenger away. On his return to Lukou the messenger told his new commander that Guan Yu was very much pleased and would cease to worry about threats from them. Lu Xun, delighted with the result, at once sent out spies to gather more information on Guan Yu’s moves, and they returned to say that most of the troops in Jingzhou had been removed to assist in the siege of Fancheng, which was to be seriously assaulted as soon as Guan Yu recovered from his wound.

This news was promptly sent on to Sun Quan, who at once called in Lu Meng to decide upon the next move.

“Now is the favorable moment to get possession of Jingzhou,” said Sun Quan. “I propose to send you and my brother, Sun Jiao, to lead the army.”

This Sun Jiao was really a cousin, as he was the second son of Sun Quan’s uncle. His familiar name was Shuming.

But Lu Meng objected. “My lord, if you trust me than employ me alone; if you trust Shuming, then employ him only. You

cannot have forgotten the conflict between Zhou Yu and Cheng Pu when they were associate commanders. Although the final decision lay with Zhou Yu, yet the other presumed upon his seniority. All ended well because Cheng Pu recognized the ability of his colleague and so supported him. Now I am not as capable as Zhou Yu, but Shuming is closer to you than Cheng Pu. I fear it will be an obstacle to have both Shuming and myself as commanders."

Sun Quan saw the strength of his argument, and appointed Lu Meng alone as commander, while his cousin Sun Jiao was to help him with the supplies. Lu Meng thanked his lord for the commission, mustered his force of 30,000 men, and assembled fourscore ships for the expedition.

A number of good swimmers were chosen to be disguised as merchants, dressed in white robes. These were put on board to row the vessels while the veterans were hidden in the holds of the big ships. Lu Meng selected seven officers to advance with him in a column and the remainder of the forces were left with Sun Quan in reserve. Letters were also sent to Lu Xun, informing him of the operation, and to Cao Cao, urging him to order his army to attack Guan Yu in the rear.

The sailors in white robes navigated the fast ships toward Xunyang River day and night and soon reached its north bank. When the beacon-keepers came down to question them, the men of Wu said they were traders forced into the place by contrary winds. And they offered gifts to the beacon-keepers, who accepted them and let the ships anchor close to the shore.

At about the second watch the soldiers, coming out of hiding in the holds of the ships, suddenly fell upon the

beacon-keepers and made them prisoners, officers and men. Then the signal for a general landing was given, and all the soldiers from the eighty ships went ashore. Every key position was attacked, and Guan Yu's men were captured and carried off to the ships, not a single one being allowed to escape. Then the whole force hurried off toward Jingzhou, whose defenders were entirely unaware of their impending danger.

Nearing Jingzhou, Lu Meng spoke kindly to his captives and gave them rich gifts in order to induce them to have the gates opened for him to enter the city. He won them over to his side, and they agreed to aid him. They were then told to light a torch as a signal for the army to enter. So they went in advance and arrived at the city about midnight. The wardens, recognizing their voices, opened the gates for them. Once within, they shouted and lit a fire. Immediately the men of Wu came in with a rush and were soon in possession of the city.

The first order issued by Lu Meng was to spare the people. Instant death was to be the punishment for any murder or robbery. The various officials in the city were allowed to retain their offices and continue their work. Guan Yu's family was put in safe accommodation without any danger of being assaulted by outsiders. A report was sent immediately to Sun Quan.

One very wet day Lu Meng, with a few horsemen as escort, was going round the four gates of the city when he saw a soldier taking a local resident's broad-brimmed hat and putting it over his armor to keep it dry. The offender was seized. He turned out to be a fellow villager of Lu Meng's, but that did not save him.

“You are an old acquaintance, but you knew my order—why did you disobey it?”

The man pleaded in tears. “I was afraid the rain would spoil my armor, and I took the hat to protect it. I did not take it for my own advantage, but to protect government property. Spare me, General, for I am your fellow villager.”

“I know you were protecting your armor, but still it was disobedience of my order against taking anything from the people.”

The soldier was beheaded, and his head exposed as a warning. But afterwards Lu Meng had the body buried decently and wept at the grave for the loss of his fellow villager. Never after this was there the least laxity of discipline.

When Sun Quan visited the city, Lu Meng met him at the boundary and led him to the official residence, where he issued rewards and commendations. Then he ordered the former prefect, Pan Chin, to continue his charge of the city. Yu Jin, who was in prison, was freed and sent back to Cao Cao. When the people had been comforted and the soldiers rewarded, there was a great banquet in celebration of the success of the expedition.

Sun Quan said to Lu Meng, “Jingzhou is now in our hands, but there are still the two cities of Gongan and Nanjun. How can we get these?”

At this Yu Fan rose and said, “There is no need to send an army, not even to use a single bow or arrow. I can persuade Fu Shi-ren to surrender.”

“How will you do it?” asked Sun Quan.

“He and I have been good friends since we were young, and if I explain the grave situation to him I am sure he will come over to our side.”

Consequently Yu Fan, with five hundred soldiers, left quickly for Gong-an, where his friend was in command.

Now the fall of Jingzhou had reached Fu Shi-ren, who at once ordered his men to close the city gates and maintain a firm defense. At this time Yu Fan arrived, but was refused entrance. So he wrote a letter, fixed it to an arrow, and shot it into the city. A soldier picked it up and took it to Fu Shiren, who found it to be a convincing letter from his old friend, urging him to surrender. Recalling how Guan Yu hated him before he left for his expedition to Fancheng, Fu Shi-ren thought it would be well if he submitted to Wu.

Without further ado he ordered the wardens to open the gate to allow his friend in. After greetings they talked of old times, and Yu Fan praised Sun Quan’s magnanimity and his respect for the wise and scholarly. These words greatly pleased Fu Shi-ren, who at once went with his friend to Jingzhou, taking with him his seal of office. He was introduced to Sun Quan, who reappointed him commander of Gongan. However, Lu Meng thought the appointment imprudent while Guan Yu was yet unconquered. He said to his master in private that it would be better to send Fu Shi-ren to Nanjun to induce Mi Fang to join him in deserting. His advice was followed, and Fu Shi-ren was recalled.

“You and Mi Fang are good friends. I want you to go to Nanjun and win him over for me. I will reward you richly,” said Sun Quan.

Fu Shi-ren accepted the mission and duly left for Nanjun.

Gongan’s defender failed when tried,
So Wang Fu’s words were justified.

The result of his journey will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SIX

Xu Huang Fights a Great Battle on the Mian River

Guan Yu Retreats to Maicheng in Defeat

The fall of Jingzhou put Mi Fang in a quandary, and before he could decide upon any course his colleague Fu Shi-ren came to see him. Mi Fang at once welcomed him in and asked him for the reason of his visit.

Fu Shi-ren went directly to the purpose of his visit. “I’m not disloyal,” he said, “but I was in a tight spot and couldn’t hold on, so I’ve surrendered to Wu. And I advise you to do the same.”

“You and I have both received great kindness from the Prince of Hanzhong, and I can’t bear to turn against him.”

“Don’t you remember how intensely Guan Yu hated both of us when he went away? If he comes back victorious I don’t think he will forgive us. You must think it over carefully.”

“My brother and I have followed the prince these many years. How can I betray him like this?”

Just as he was hesitating, there came a messenger from Guan Yu, who said that the army at Fancheng was short of grain

and he had been sent to demand 10,000 shi of rice from the two cities of Nanjun and Gongan. “General Guan ordered you to transport the grain to the army at once,” added the messenger. “Any delay will be punished by death.”

This sudden demand was a shock to Mi Fang. “How can I transport the rice now that Jingzhou is occupied?” he said to his colleague in despair.

“No more hesitations!” said Fu Shi-ren sternly. Drawing his sword he slew the messenger there and then.

“What have you done?” cried Mi Fang in fright.

“Guan Yu’s real intention in demanding the grain was to slay us both. Are we to fold our hands and await death? Either you surrender to Wu at once, or you’ll be put to death by Guan Yu.”

At that moment sentinels rushed in to report that Lu Meng and his army had reached the city wall. Seized by panic, Mi Fang at last agreed to defect, and went out with Fu Shi-ren to offer his submission to Lu Meng. He was duly conducted to Sun Quan, who gave him and his comrade handsome rewards. So the two cities of Nanjun and Gongan fell into the hands of Sun Quan without a fight. Following this, he proceeded to restore order and to reward his army for their services.

Away in the capital Cao Cao was discussing the situation in Jingzhou with his advisors when a messenger arrived with a letter from Sun Quan. It said that Wu was going to seize Jingzhou and asked Cao Cao to send an army to attack Guan

Yu in the rear. The letter also cautioned Cao Cao to maintain the utmost secrecy lest Guan Yu should hear of the plan.

Cao Cao consulted his advisors on this matter. Dong Zhao said, “Fancheng is besieged and the army there is waiting anxiously for relief forces. We can get someone to shoot that letter into Fancheng so as to bolster the morale of the besieged. Moreover, we should let Guan Yu know of Sun Quan’s plan. When he hears that Jingzhou is in danger he will hurry back. Then tell Xu Huang to take the chance to attack him, and we can win a complete victory.”

Cao Cao thought the plan was good and acted accordingly. He sent a messenger to Xu Huang, ordering him to attack without delay. At the same time he himself led a large force to Yanglin Slope, south of Luoyang, to rescue Cao Ren.

Xu Huang was sitting in his tent when he was told that a messenger from the Prince of Wei had arrived. He called in the messenger, who said, “The prince’s army has crossed Luoyang, and he wishes you to hasten your attack on Guan Yu in order to lift the siege of Fancheng.”

Just then scouts came to report that Guan Ping had encamped at Yancheng and Liao Hua at Sizhong, setting up a line of twelve stockades. Xu Huang ordered two of his subordinate officers to march to Yancheng with his ensigns to masquerade as if he himself was in command, while he actually took five hundred veterans along the Mian River to attack Yancheng from the rear.

When Guan Ping heard of the approach of Xu Huang he led his own division to meet him. When both sides were arrayed,

Guan Ping rode out and engaged his enemy, who turned out to be someone called Xu Shang. After three encounters the man was worsted and fled. Then his colleague came forth but after half a dozen bouts he also ran away. Guan Ping went in pursuit and harrassed the fleeing enemy for twenty li. But then there came the news that the city was on fire, and Guan Ping realized that he had fallen for the enemy's ruse. So he hastened to turn back to rescue the city. On his way he met a body of troops—standing under the great standard was the real Xu Huang.

Xu Huang shouted, "Guan Ping, my worthy nephew, how strange that you do not recognize death when it stares you in the face. Your Jingzhou has fallen into the hands of Wu and yet you are still behaving so recklessly here."

Guan Ping indignantly swung high his sword to strike Xu Huang, and they clashed. But after the third bout there was a tremendous shouting among his soldiers, for the flames within the city burst up higher than before. Guan Ping dared not follow up his desire to continue the fight, but cut his way out and made a dash for his camp at Sizhong. There he was met by Liao Hua, who also told him about the fall of Jingzhou.

"They say that Jingzhou has fallen to Lu Meng, and the news has frightened the army—what is to be done?"

"It must be a malicious rumor. If anyone repeats it, put him to death."

Just then a mounted scout came galloping up to say that Xu Huang was attacking the first stockade to the north.

“If that falls,” said Guan Ping, “the other stockades will crumble. This place has the river at its back, so the enemy won’t dare attack here. Let’s go to the rescue.”

So Liao Hua summoned his subordinate officers, to whom he said, “You must hold the place very firmly. If the enemy comes, raise a signal.”

“There is no danger here,” they said. “The camp is defended by a tenfold line of ‘deer-horns’ (abatis). Even a bird can’t fly in, let alone enemy soldiers.”

So Guan Ping and Liao Hua mustered all the veterans in the camp and went away to the rescue of the first stockade. Seeing the Wei soldiers camped on a low hill, Guan Ping said to his colleague, “Those men are positioned at an unfavorable site—let’s raid their camp tonight.”

“You take half the force, General, and I’ll hold the camp,” said Liao Hua.

When night fell, the attacking force went out. But on reaching the enemy camp Guan Ping found it to be empty. Knowing that he had again been tricked, Guan Ping turned to retreat, but it was too late. He was at once ambushed on two sides. Unable to stand, he fled back to the camp. The men of Wei followed, and presently the camp was surrounded. Guan Ping and Liao Hua were compelled to abandon the stockade and to return to their camp at Sizhong. From a distance they could see the camp on fire. As they drew near in a hurry they found enemy ensigns all around and they knew that it had also fallen into the hands of their foe. Retreating again, they hastened along the high road toward Fancheng, but presently their way

was barred by a force under Xu Huang himself. By dint of desperate fighting they got away and returned to their main camp to see Guan Yu.

"Xu Huang has got possession of Yancheng and Cao Cao's main army is on the way here in three divisions. We also hear people say that Jingzhou has been seized by Lu Meng."

Guan Yu cried angrily, "This is a fabrication of the enemy to dishearten our soldiers. We know Lu Meng is ill, and they have appointed that young fellow Lu Xun to succeed him at Lukou. There is nothing to fear."

Soon news came that Xu Huang had arrived with an army. At once Guan Yu told his men to saddle his charger.

"Father, you are not strong enough to go into the battle," said Guan Ping.

"Xu Huang and I were once friends, and I know him well. I will give him the chance to retreat, and if he doesn't then I will slay him as a warning to the others."

Mounting his charger, Guan Yu rode out as impetuously as of old, and at the sight of the old warrior the men of Wei trembled with fear. When he came close enough to his enemy, Guan Yu checked his steed and asked, "Where is Xu Gong-ming (Xu Huang)?"

As a reply, the banners parted and Xu Huang appeared under the standard. With a bow he said, "Several years have passed since I last met you, General, but I had not expected to see you already going gray. I have not forgotten those brave days

of old, when we were together and you taught me so much, for which I am very grateful. Now your fame has spread throughout the country, and as an old friend of yours, I do admire you. I consider myself very fortunate to see you again."

Guan Yu replied, "We have been quite intimate friends, not casual acquaintances. But why have you pressed my son so hard recently?"

Xu Huang suddenly turned to the officers around him and cried fiercely, "I will give a thousand taels of gold as a reward for Guan Yu's head!"

Guan Yu, greatly shocked, asked, "Why do you speak like that?"

"This is government business, and I dare not let personal friendship override my public duty."

So saying, he whirled his battle-ax and rode at Guan Yu, who, much enraged, threw up his sword to strike. They fought some eighty bouts, but although he lacked nothing of his former prowess and his skill excelled all others, his right arm was still weak from the wound. Guan Ping, afraid that his father might suffer, hastily beat the gong for retreat. Guan Yu rode back to camp.

Suddenly the noise of a deafening shouting was heard. It was raised by Cao Ren and his men. Having heard of the arrival of troops from his own side, Cao Ren made a sortie and emerged from the besieged city of Fancheng to help Xu Huang attack Guan Yu. Confronted by two forces, the army of Jingzhou

was thrown into chaos. Guan Yu, with all his officers, fled toward the upper reaches of the Xiang River, hotly pursued by the army of Wei. Crossing the river, he made for Xiangyang. But on the way he heard the shocking report that Jingzhou had been seized by Lu Meng and his family, trapped inside the city. Greatly alarmed, Guan Yu dared not proceed to Xiangyang but turned toward Gongan.

Soon, scouts came with the sad news that Fu Shi-ren had defected and the city was also in the hands of Wu. Guan Yu was brimming with fury at this betrayal when there came yet another blow. Some of the men sent to collect grain returned from Nanjun and reported the murder of their leader by Fu Shi-ren and the further betrayal of Mi Fang. At this last blow Guan Yu was overcome with rage. It was really too much. His wound reopened, and he collapsed to the ground.

When he regained consciousness, he said to Wang Fu, “How I regret I did not heed your words! And now all this happened just as you had forewarned me.”

“But why weren’t the beacon fires lighted?” he asked incredulously.

“Lu Meng ordered the sailors of his ships to disguise themselves as traders in white robes, but hid the soldiers in the holds of the vessels. They crossed the river and seized the beacon guards, so preventing them from kindling the fire.”

Sighing deeply, Guan Yu stamped his foot and lamented, “I have fallen for their sinister ruse. How can I look my brother in the face?”

Then Zhao Lei, the loyal officer in charge of supplies, spoke up: “Things are perilous now. We must send someone to Chengdu to ask for help, while also going by land to Jingzhou to try to recover it.”

Guan Yu accepted this advice and so two messengers left at once for Chengdu to seek help, while the army set out for Jingzhou, Guan Yu leading and Liao Hua with Guan Ping bringing up the rear.

The siege of Fancheng being thus lifted, Cao Ren went to see his master. With tears he acknowledged his fault.

“It was the will of Heaven, and no fault of yours,” said Cao Cao.

Then he rewarded his army and went to view the stockade at Sizhong. After inspecting the surrounding ground, he remarked, “The Jingzhou soldiers had surrounded their stockade with abatis ten layers deep, yet Xu Huang was brave enough to break through. With my thirty years of campaigning I should not have dared to penetrate into such a strong defense. He is truly valiant and wise, and both to a high degree.”

All agreed in admiration for their comrade.

Cao Cao’s army marched back to its camps. When Xu Huang returned, Cao Cao went out of the stockade to welcome him, and noted with joy the excellent order and discipline of his army. Every man was in his place, the ranks perfectly kept, all without a trace of disorder.

"You are exactly the General Zhou Ya-fu* of today!" said Cao Cao, and on the spot conferred on him the title of "General–Pacifier of the South." Xu Huang was sent soon after to strengthen the defense of Xiangyang against Guan Yu's army.

The fate of the Jingzhou region being still undecided, Cao Cao remained in his position, waiting for further news.

Guan Yu found himself at a standstill on the road to Jingzhou with the army of Wu in front and the men of Wei coming up behind. What was to be done? He discussed the situation with Zhao Lei, who proposed sending someone to accuse Lu Meng of betraying the former alliance.

Zhao Lei said, "When Lu Meng was at Lukou he had written to you, promising to join hands with you in the destruction of Cao Cao. Now he has fought for the enemy. This is a betrayal of our alliance. Let us halt here for the time being and send someone with your letter to reproach him. Let us await his response."

So the letter was written and sent.

Meanwhile, by Lu Meng's command, special protection was given to the families of all the officers who went on the expedition with Guan Yu, and they were supplied with all they needed. Even the ailing members of their households were treated by physicians, free of charge. Grateful for this kindness they made no attempt to disrupt the new rule. When Guan Yu's envoy came, the messenger was welcomed into the city by Lu Meng himself and well treated.

When he had read the letter, Lu Meng said to the bearer, "You must understand the different circumstances. When I formed a league with General Guan it was my personal desire. Now I am acting on my master's orders and cannot do as I wish. Please return and explain this well to your general."

The bearer of the letter was entertained at a banquet and escorted to repose at the guesthouse, where the families of the officers all came for news of their dear ones. They also brought him letters or messages for the officers, assuring them of their safety and wellbeing. When he left the city, Lu Meng himself went to see him off.

On his return, the messenger told Guan Yu what Lu Meng had said and told him that his family, as well as those of the officers and men, were all safe and well cared for. This, however, did not please Guan Yu at all, for he saw in this merely a wicked scheme to gain favor and popularity.

"The villain! If I cannot slay him while I live, I will, after I am dead. My hate will not go unappeased."

He roughly dismissed the messenger, who went out and was at once surrounded by those whose families were in the city, eager to hear news of them. And when he gave them the letters and messages and told them that Lu Meng had treated their families very well, there was great rejoicing among the men in the camp, and with it departed their desire to fight.

Guan Yu led the army to attack Jingzhou, but day after day many of the men deserted and ran away to the very city they were meant to be attacking. So Guan Yu's bitterness and anger increased daily, and he advanced in angry haste. One

day there was a great shouting ahead and he found his way blocked.

“Why not surrender, Yun-chang?” said the leader of this body, Jiang Qin by name.

“I am a general of the Hans. Do you think I will ever surrender to a rebel?” roared Guan Yu.

So saying he whipped his horse forward and raised his sword to strike. However, after only three bouts Jiang Qin fled as if in defeat. Guan Yu followed for about twenty li when amid loud shouting there suddenly appeared Han Dang from a gully on his left and Zhou Tai from another on his right. At this moment Jiang Qin also wheeled round to fight, so that Guan Yu was opposed by three forces all at once. Unable to withstand these, he retreated.

Before he had gone very far he saw standing on a slope to the south a thick crowd of people and flapping in the wind a white banner bearing the words, NATIVES OF JINGZHOU. At the sight of Guan Yu and his army, the crowd began to call out, “Surrender quickly, natives of Jingzhou!” Guan Yu, seized with another fit of fury, wanted to rush in and slay these agitators, but just then two other cohorts appeared led by Ding Feng and Xu Sheng to support the original three forces. The five bodies of men raised a ruckus of shouting and drum beating that seemed to shake the very earth. Like the kernel of a nut, Guan Yu was entirely surrounded.

This was not all. As the battle drew on the number of his followers diminished each moment. He fought on till dusk, and looking about him he saw all the hills crowded with

Jingzhou folk and heard them calling brother to brother, son to father, or father to son, till his soldiers' hearts melted. One by one they ran to their relatives, heedless of their general's prohibition. Presently he had but three hundred left, but with them he kept up the battle till midnight. Then there was another shouting from the east. Luckily it was his son Guan Ping and the faithful Liao Hua that had come to his rescue.

"The soldiers have no heart to fight," said Guan Ping. "We must find some place to camp till help can arrive. There is Maicheng, small but sufficient to encamp our men."

Guan Yu consented, and the exhausted army hurried there as quickly as they could.

The small force was divided among the four gates for defense. Here Guan Yu discussed the situation with his men. Zhao Lei proposed seeking assistance from the nearby city of Shangyong, which was guarded by Liu Feng, Liu Bei's adopted son, and Meng Da. There, they could recover from their present difficulty and wait until the army came from their homeland.

But even as they were discussing this the army of Wu came up and laid siege to the small city.

"Who will break through to get help from Shangyong?" asked Guan Yu.

"I will," volunteered Liao Hua.

"And I will escort you past the danger zone," said Guan Ping.

Guan Yu wrote a letter, which Liao Hua concealed next to his skin, and after a full meal, he rode out of the gate. Ding Feng at once tried to stop him, but Guan Ping fought vigorously and drove him away. So Liao Hua was able to break through the siege, and Guan Ping returned to the city. Then they barred the gates and did not venture out again.

Now let us turn to Liu Feng and Meng Da in Shangyong. After capturing the city the two had remained to guard it, and the former prefect, Sun Dan by name, had surrendered. Liu Feng had been created an assistant general, with Meng Da to aid him. When they heard of Guan Yu's defeat, they sought counsel with each other. Then Liao Hua came and he was admitted into the city.

Liao Hua said, "General Guan is besieged in Maicheng. As help from the west will be a long time in coming, I have been sent to beg you for assistance. I earnestly hope you will set out with your troops to Maicheng as quickly as possible, for any delay will be fatal to the general."

Liu Feng replied: "Sir, go and rest awhile till we can decide."

So Liao Hua went to the guesthouse, where he waited anxiously for them to lend help while the two leaders talked over the matter.

Liu Feng said, "My uncle is in a quandry—what is to be done?"

"Wu is very powerful," replied his colleague. "Now they have control over the whole region, save this small crumb of a place, Maicheng. What is worse, Cao Cao is close by with

about half a million men. We have no hope to stand against the two mighty armies with our meager force of mountain people. We must be careful."

"I know all this. But Guan Yu is my uncle, and I can't bear to sit still and not try to save him."

"So you hold him as an uncle!" said Meng Da with a sneer. "Yet I don't think he holds you much as a nephew. I hear he was annoyed when the Prince of Hanzhong first adopted you. And after your father acquired his new status and was going to nominate his heir, I was told he consulted Zhuge Liang, who said the affair was one to be decided within the family and declined to advise. Then the prince sent someone to ask Guan Yu for advice. Did he name you? Not at all. He was opposed to you on the grounds that you were a son by adoption and could have no place in the succession. Furthermore, he urged the prince to send you here to this distant mountain city lest you might cause trouble. This is common knowledge, and I'm surprised that you are ignorant of it. Yet today you make such a big deal out of his being your uncle and are even willing to run a great risk to support him."

"Granted that what you say is true, still what reply can we give?"

"Simply say that this city is only recently taken and quite unsettled, so you dare not move lest it be lost."

Liu Feng took his colleague's view, sent for the messenger and told him so. Liao Hua was greatly shocked to hear this.

He threw himself on the ground and bowed his head, imploring them to help.

“If so, the general will die,” he cried.

“Even if we go, how can a cup of water extinguish a wagon load of blazing firewood?” said Meng Da. “Hasten back and await patiently for help from the west.”

Liao Hua renewed his entreaty with a flood of tears but the two were unmoved. They simply rose, shook out their sleeves, and went inside. Knowing that his efforts were futile, Liao Hua thought the only way out was to get help from the prince. So, cursing bitterly at the two heartless men, he rode out of the city to embark on a journey toward Chengdu.

At Maicheng Guan Yu looked anxiously, but vainly, for the coming of the expected aid. He was in a sorry plight. His men numbered but a few hundred, many of them wounded. And there was no grain.

Then someone came to the foot of the city wall and, calling out to the men on the wall not to shoot, said he had a message for the commander. It was Zhuge Jin and he was allowed to enter. When he had saluted his host and taken tea, he began his persuasive speech.

“I have come at the command of my master to exhort you to take a wise course. From of old it has always been recognized that ‘A true hero must bow to circumstances.’ The nine districts of Jingzhou that you once ruled have come under another, with the exception of this single city. But with no food within nor help from without, it will fall at any moment.

Therefore, general, why not take my advice and join your fortunes with my master? You will be restored to the governorship of this region and reunited with your family. I entreat you to reflect upon this."

Guan Yu replied seriously, "I am but a common soldier of Jieliang, yet my lord has treated me as his own 'hands and feet' (brother). I will never betray him for an enemy country. If the city falls, so ends my life. Jade may be shattered, but its whiteness remains; bamboo may be burned, but its joints* cannot be destroyed. My body may perish, but my fame will live through history. Say no more, but leave the city quickly. I will fight Sun Quan to death."

"My master desires that his house and yours may be united by a marriage bond so that you can assist each other to destroy Cao Cao and restore the Hans. He means no harm. Why do you persist in this wrong course?"

He had hardly finished this speech than Guan Ping drew his sword to slay him. But his father checked him.

"Remember his brother is in Shu, helping your uncle. If you hurt him you will injure their brotherly affection."

He then ordered his men to lead Zhuge Jin away. Crimson with shame, he left the city. When he saw his master he told him of Guan Yu's obduracy and rejection of all persuasion.

"He is indeed a loyal servant!" said Sun Quan in admiration. "Then what is to be done?"

“Let us make a divination according to the Book of Changes,” said Lu Fan.

So lots were cast, which were interpreted to mean that the enemy would flee to a distance.

Sun Quan asked Lu Meng, “If he escapes to a distant land, how are you going to capture him?”

“The divination exactly fits in with my scheme,” he replied. “Even though Guan Yu had wings to soar to the skies he could not fly out of my net.”

The dragon in a puddle is the sport of shrimps,
The phoenix in a cage is mocked by small birds.

What scheme Lu Meng would employ will be revealed in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* A general in West Han, famous for his highly disciplined army.

* In Chinese the character for a bamboo joint is jie, which is a homonym for “rectitude.”

CHAPTER SEVENTY-SEVEN

Guan Yu's Ghost Visits Jade Spring Mountain

Cao Cao Is Possessed in Luoyang

At the end of the last chapter Sun Quan asked Lu Meng for a plan to capture Guan Yu. To his question Lu Meng replied, "As he has very few men left, Guan Yu will not venture to escape via the high road but seek the risky path to the north of Maicheng. Therefore we can lay an ambush about twenty li north of the city. When he comes, do not stop him, but only harass his rear. Thus his men will be disheartened and he will be forced to turn toward Linju. Set another ambush in the hills there, and we will capture him. For the present, we can attack the city vigorously on all sides but leave the north gate open for him to escape."

Before carrying out this plan, Sun Quan asked Lu Fan to consult the diviners again. Presently the diviner announced that the enemy would flee toward the northwest, but would be caught before midnight.

So Zhu Ran was assigned the task of placing the ambush at the first position with 5,000 veterans while Pan Zhang, with five hundred men, was to lie in wait near Linju.

Back in Maicheng, Guan Yu mustered his fighting men. All told, there were only a little more than three hundred foot and horse soldiers. And there was no food or forage left. That night men of Wu came to the city walls and called to their friends inside by name, and many of these climbed over the wall and deserted, reducing the small force still further. There was no sign of the rescue force, so anxiously awaited. Guan Yu, at the end of his resources, turned to Wang Fu in deep remorse: "How much I regret I did not heed your warning! Now we are in such a crisis! What is to be done?"

Wang Fu replied in tears, "Even if the ablest strategist of old should come to life again he would be helpless in this case."

Zhao Lei said, "The rescue force is still not here. It must be that Liu Feng and Meng Da have purposely withheld help. Let us abandon this isolated place and escape to Shu. We can return with a new army to recover the region."

"I think so, too," agreed Guan Yu.

Then he ascended the walls and surveyed the country. Noting that there were but few enemy soldiers outside the north gate, he called in some of the local inhabitants and inquired about the nature of the country on that side.

They replied, "There are all hilly paths in that direction, but they lead to Shu."

"We will go that way tonight," said Guan Yu.

But Wang Fu suggested taking the main road, pointing out that they would surely fall into an ambush if they went by the pathways.

“There may be an ambush, but what do I fear?” said the old warrior.

Orders were given to ready the soldiers for the night sortie.

“At least be very careful, general,” implored Wang Fu, weeping bitterly. “With my hundred men I will defend this city to the very last. Even if the city falls, we will never surrender. We will be expecting your speedy rescue.”

Guan Yu also wept. Then leaving Zhou Cang to guard the city with Wang Fu, he rode out with Guan Ping, Zhao Lei, and a weak force of some two hundred men from the north gate. Guan Yu, his great sword ready to hand, took the lead. About the first watch, a distance of twenty li lay between them and the city. There they saw a deep cleft in the hills, from which echoed the sound of drums and gongs and the shouting of many men.

Soon there appeared a large force with Zhu Ran at its head. He came dashing forward, and summoned Guan Yu to surrender to save his life. But Guan Yu whipped his steed to a gallop and bore down on the leader with anger in his eyes. Zhu Ran ran away. Guan Yu followed him but soon there came the loud boom of a large drum, and out sprang the hidden men from all sides. Guan Yu dared not engage such a number, and fled in the direction of Linju. Then Zhu Ran came up from behind and attacked the fleeing soldiers, so that Guan Yu’s forces gradually diminished.

Still he struggled on. A little farther drums rolled again, and torches lit up all round. This was Pan Zhang's ambush, and he appeared flourishing his sword. Guan Yu whirled his blade and went to meet him, but Pan Zhang ran away after a couple of bouts. However, Guan Yu dared not linger to fight but sought refuge among the mountains. Guan Ping came up from behind and told his father the sad news that the loyal Zhao Lei had been killed. Guan Yu was overcome with grief. Then he told his son to protect the rear while he forced his way in front.

With only a dozen men in his following he reached Jueshi, a place banked on both sides by hills overgrown with trees and brambles. At the foot of these hills lay a thick mass of reeds and decayed leaves. It was then the close of the fifth watch. Presently the small party stumbled into another ambush, and the enemy thrust forth hooks and long ropes. Entangled in these, Guan Yu's horse fell, throwing him reeling out of the saddle, and he was swiftly taken prisoner. Guan Ping, hearing of his father's capture, flew to his rescue, but the two Wu forces came up and surrounded him on all sides. Alone, he fought them all to the last of his strength, then he, too, was captured. So father and son were both captives.

With great joy Sun Quan heard of the success of his plans the next morning. He assembled all his officers in his tent to await the arrival of the prisoners. Before long, Ma Zhong, who had actually caught Guan Yu, came hustling his prisoner before him.

"I had long admired you for your great virtue," said Sun Quan to Guan Yu, "so I offered you an alliance through marriage. Why did you refuse? You always regarded yourself

invincible—how come you are my prisoner today? Are you going to submit to me now?"

Guan Yu answered, cursing indignantly at his enemy: "You blue-eyed brat! You red-bearded rat! I pledged in the Peach Garden with my sworn brothers to uphold the Hans. Do you think I will ever associate with a rebel like you? I am beguiled into your vile schemes, and I am ready to die. There is no need to waste time with words."

"He is a real hero, and I do admire him," said Sun Quan to his officials. "I will treat him well and endeavor to win him over. What do you say to this?"

One of them objected, "Remember how Cao Cao tried in vain to win him to his side. When Cao Cao held him he treated him lavishly. He made him a marquis; entertained him every three days with a small banquet and every five days with a big banquet; gave him gold and silver as presents. But in spite of all this, he failed to retain him at his side. Eventually he broke through his passes, slew his officers, and went away. Today Cao Cao is in such dread of him that he almost moved the capital to avoid him. Now he is in your power, destroy him at once, or you will be sorry. Evil will come if you spare him."

Sun Quan reflected upon this advice for some time.

"You are right," he said at last and gave the order for execution.

So Guan Yu and his son were both killed. It was the winter of the last month of the twenty-fourth year of Jian An (A.D. 219). Guan Yu was fifty-eight when he met his death.

A poem says:

Peerless indeed was Guan Yu of the latter days of Han,
Head and shoulders stood he out among the best;
Godlike and terrible he was in the arts of war,
Elegant and refined he was also well-versed in learning.
Resplendent as the noonday sun in the heavens,
Haloed as are the noblest of those early days,
He stands, the brightest model for all ages,
And not only for the strenuous days of his time.

And another poem says:

To seek a true hero, go to the ancient town of Jieliang,
See how all men revere Yun-chang.
By the Peach Garden oath he swore brotherhood with his prince,
And they enjoy offerings through all ages.
Incomparable, their aura spreads across the land;
Resplendent as the great lights of the firmament.
Temples to the noble warrior abound even today,
How many sunsets their venerable trees and birds have seen!

So the great warrior ended his life. His famous steed, also captured with his master, was sent to Sun Quan, who gave it as a reward to its captor, Ma Zhong. But Red Hare survived its master only a short time. The faithful steed refused to feed and died a few days later.

Foreboding of misfortune came to Wang Fu in Maicheng. His bones felt cold; his flesh crept; and nightmares visited him in his sleep. He told Zhou Cang of a terrible dream he had in the night. “I saw our lord standing before me, drenched in blood.

I hastened to question him, but suddenly I woke up in fright. What could it mean?"

Just then soldiers came to report the horrible news that the men of Wu had come to the city wall with the heads of their general and his son to call them to surrender. Wang Fu and Zhou Cang, terrified, hurried up to the wall to see for themselves. Alas! what they beheld left them with no doubt. With a despairing cry Wang Fu threw himself over the wall and perished, while Zhou Cang killed himself with his own sword. Thus the city also fell to Wu.

Now the spirit of Guan Yu did not dissipate into air, but wandered through the void till it came to the Jade Spring Hill in Dangyang. There lived a venerable Buddhist priest whose religious name was Pujing. He was originally an abbot of a temple, called Guardian of the State, at Sishui Pass. Later he left the temple because he helped Guan Yu escape from the pass (See Chapter Twenty-Seven) and during his travel around the country he had reached this place. Entranced with its natural beauty, he had built himself a shelter of boughs and grass, where he sat meditating on Buddhist teachings. He had a novice with him to beg food and to attend to his simple wants.

That night the moon was bright and the air serene. Just after midnight Pujing was meditating in the stillness of the mountains when he suddenly heard a voice calling loudly in the sky: "Give me back my head, give me back my head."

Gazing upward, he saw the shape of a man mounted on a steed known as Red Hare and holding in his hand a shining blade, the Blue Dragon. On his left was a general of fair

complexion while on his right, a warrior of swarthy countenance and a curly beard. The three of them floated along on a cloud, which came to rest on top of the hill.

The recluse recognized the figure as that of Guan Yu, so with his flagellum he hit the lintel of his hut and cried, “Where is Yun-chang?”

The spirit, suddenly alerted, dismounted, sailed down with the wind, and came to a stop in front of the hut. Interlacing his fingers, he stood reverently and inquired, “Who are you, my teacher, and what is your religious name?”

“My name is Pujing,” replied the monk. “We met in the Guardian of the State temple at Sishui Pass. Have you forgotten that?”

“I am deeply grateful for the help you gave me then. Misfortune has befallen me, and I have ceased to live. I would like you to enlighten me with your instruction, to help me recover my bearings.”

“Let us say nothing about past wrongs or present rights, nor about causes or consequences. I know that Lu Meng has killed you and you call aloud for the return of your head. But who will return the heads of your victims, such as Yan Liang, Wen Chou, and the six officers of the five passes?”

A realization came over Guan Yu, who bowed in acceptance of the Buddhist teaching and disappeared. Later his spirit often visited the hill, manifesting its sacred power to protect the people. Grateful for his virtue, the local people built a temple on top of the Jade Spring Hill to honor him and

sacrificial offerings were given at the four seasons. Later a poet wrote a couplet for the temple, which reads:

Ruddy face foretold an honest heart; he rode the wind on the Red
Hare, mindful of the Red Emperor;
By the blue-shaded lamp he read the histories; he held his Blue
Dragon blade, heart pure as the azure heaven.

The execution of Guan Yu gave Sun Quan undisputed possession of the whole of the Jingzhou area. He rewarded his soldiers and spread a great feast, at which Lu Meng held the seat of honor. At the banquet he said, "Thanks to the magnificent service of General Lu my long-cherished desire to possess this area has been finally satisfied."

Lu Meng again and again declined the honor, but Sun Quan continued, "In the past Zhou Yu was superior to most men, and he defeated Cao Cao at the Red Cliff. Alas! he died too soon. Then Lu Su succeeded him. In his first meeting with me he outlined to me the general policy of creating a kingdom. That was the first instance of his keen insight. When Cao Cao descended upon my country, and when everyone advised me to yield, he advised me to summon Zhou Yu to oppose him. That was the second instance of his keen insight. But he blundered when he advised me to lend Jingzhou to Liu Bei. Now Lu Meng has succeeded in seizing the city and in that he far surpasses both his predecessors."

Then he filled a goblet and presented it to his general. Lu Meng took the cup, but just as he raised it to his lips to drink a sudden change possessed him. Dashing the cup to the ground,

he seized Sun Quan, cursing fiercely: “You blue-eyed brat! Red-bearded rat! Don’t you recognize me?”

Consternation seized the whole assembly. Some rushed to the rescue of their lord, but Lu Meng threw Sun Quan to the ground, strode forward, and sat down in his chair. Then, with his eyebrows knitted and his eyes glaring, he cried: “After I quelled the Yellow Turbans, I was the man to fear in the whole country for more than thirty years. But you victimized me with your wicked schemes. Alive I was not able to gorge upon your flesh; dead I will pursue the spirit of your being. I am Guan Yun-chang, the Marquis of Hanshou.”

Terror-stricken, Sun Quan led all his officers to kneel down and bow. Then they saw Lu Meng drop dead, with blood gushing from the seven orifices of his body.

In due time Lu Meng was honorably buried. He was posthumously given the title, “Prefect of Nanjun and Marquis of Chuanling.” His son inherited his noble rank.

Sun Quan, unable to get over the shock of this strange and terrible event, was preoccupied with the thought of Guan Yu. One day it was announced that Zhang Zhao had come from Jianyie to see him. Sun Quan called him in.

Zhang Zhao said, “My lord, by slaying Guan Yu and his son you have brought imminent danger to your state. You know that by the oath of the Peach Garden, Liu Bei vowed to live and die together with his two brothers. Now Liu Bei not only has the force of the whole of Shu at his calling, but also Zhuge Liang as his chief advisor, and valiant fighters like the other four Tiger Generals to carry out his behest. When Liu

Bei hears of the death of Guan Yu and his son, he will surely send forth his entire army to avenge them, and I fear you cannot stand such an onslaught."

Sun Quan started up in fright. "I have made a grave error," he cried. "What is to be done now?"

"Have no fear," replied Zhang Zhao. "I have a plan to fend off the army of Shu from our borders and keep Jingzhou quite safe."

"What is your plan?" asked Sun Quan.

"Cao Cao, with his huge force, covets the whole country. Liu Bei, eager for revenge, will ally himself with him; should these two combine forces against us, we would be in serious danger. Therefore I advise you to send Guan Yu's head to Cao Cao to make it appear that Cao Cao was the prime cause of his destruction. This should divert Liu Bei's desire for revenge against Cao Cao instead of us. Then we can take advantage of their fight to develop our own designs. I think this is the best course of action."

Sun Quan thought the move worth making, and so the head of the great warrior was placed in a box and sent off that very day to Cao Cao.

At this time Cao Cao's army had marched back to Luoyang. When he heard of the coming of the gruesome gift he said joyfully, "So Yun-chang is dead—now I can sleep soundly at night."

But Sima Yi saw through the ruse and said, “This is a trick to divert evil against us.”

“What do you mean?” asked Cao Cao.

“When they swore brotherhood in the Peach Garden, Liu Bei and his two brothers vowed to live and die together. Now Sun Quan is fearful of Liu Bei’s revenge for the execution of Guan Yu, and so he sends the head to divert Liu Bei’s wrath toward you. He wishes Liu Bei to attack you instead of himself. Then he will try to accomplish his ends while you two are engaged in war.”

“You are right,” said Cao Cao. “And now what should I do?”

“That is easy. You can make a wooden image of Guan Yu’s body and bury it with his head in a funeral befitting a minister of the state. When Liu Bei hears of this he will turn his hate toward Sun Quan and raise all his forces to attack him. Then we will wait and see the result of their battle and attack whoever emerges the weaker. And if we can destroy either of the two, the other will perish before very long.”

Cao Cao was very pleased with the advice. He called in the messenger from Wu. When the box was presented to him he opened it and looked into the face of the dead general. The features had not changed and the face looked exactly the same as of old. Cao Cao smiled.

“I hope you have been well since our last meeting, Yun-chang,” said Cao Cao.

To his horror, Guan Yu's mouth opened, his eyes rolled, and his long beard and hair moved. Cao Cao collapsed to the ground in a swoon.

His officials rushed to his rescue, but it was a long time before he recovered consciousness.

"General Guan is indeed more than human," he said.

The messenger from Wu then told him how Lu Meng had been possessed and killed by Guan Yu's spirit, and how he fell to cursing and reviling his master, Sun Quan.

After hearing this story Cao Cao, even more horrified, prepared sacrifices to offer to the spirit of the dead warrior. An effigy was carved out of eaglewood and buried outside the south gate, with all the rites of a prince. Officials of all levels were ordered to take part in the funeral procession and Cao Cao himself bowed before the coffin and poured a libation. He also conferred on the dead warrior the posthumous title of "Prince of Jing," and appointed wardens to look after the tomb. The messenger was sent back to Wu.

The sad tidings, however, had not yet reached the land of Shu. At that time Liu Bei was in his capital, Chengdu. One day Fa Zheng went in to see him with a petition: "Your Highness, your consort has passed away and Lady Sun has returned to her maiden home, perhaps never to come back. The correct conduct of human relations should not be set at nought. Therefore a second consort should be sought, so that all affairs may be appropriately handled within the palace."

As Liu Bei voiced no objection, Fa Zheng continued: “There is the sister of Wu Yi, comely and virtuous, and declared by a prophet as destined to high honor. She was betrothed to Liu Mao, son of Liu Yan, but he died in youth, and she has remained unmarried. Your Highness can take her as your consort.”

“But Liu Mao and I are of the same house. This marriage will be against propriety.”

“Well, there is a precedent in history. The case is similar to the marriage of Duke Wen of Jin and Huai Ying.”*

Upon this Liu Bei gave his consent and wedded the lady, who later bore him two sons, the elder of whom was named Yong and the younger Li.

Meanwhile, the whole land of Shu was prospering, the people enjoying peace and the state becoming affluent. The crops were doing well and the fields yielded bountiful harvests. Just as everything looked perfect there suddenly came someone from Jingzhou with the news of Guan Yu’s angry rejection of Sun Quan’s marriage proposal.

“Jingzhou will be in danger!” said Zhuge Liang. “We must send someone to replace Guan Yu.”

But this alarming news was followed by a series of happy tidings from Jingzhou of the victories Guan Yu had won in battle. Then Guan Xing came to see his uncle and reported his father’s great success in destroying Cao Cao’s seven forces by drowning. Some time later scouts brought yet another piece of good news, which said that Guan Yu had installed

beacon towers along the riverbank and had taken every precaution against Wu. Thus Liu Bei's anxiety ceased.

But evil tidings were on the way. One day Liu Bei was strangely disturbed. He was restless either in walking or sitting and he felt a creepiness of the skin that seemed to portend evil. By night, finding himself unable to sleep, he rose to read by candlelight when drowsiness overcame him and he fell asleep by the table. A cold gust of wind suddenly swept across the chamber, putting out the candle flame. When it brightened again he glanced up and saw a figure standing near the light.

"Who are you? Why do you come by night to my chamber?" he asked.

The figure made no reply, and Liu Bei got up to see who it was. Then he discovered it was his brother Guan Yu. But the figure avoided him, retreating as he advanced.

"How are you, brother? This must be something of great importance to bring you here in the dead of the night. But why do you avoid me? You're like my own flesh and blood."

Then the figure wept and said, "Brother, I hope you will send your army to avenge me."

As Guan Yu said that, a chilly blast went through the room, and he disappeared. At that moment Liu Bei awoke and then he realized he had been dreaming. Outside he could hear the watchman beating the gong for midnight. Greatly disturbed, he went out to the front hall and sent for Zhuge Liang. Soon the advisor came, and Liu Bei told him of the vision.

“That is because you have been thinking too deeply of Yun-chang lately, my lord,” said Zhuge Liang. “There is no need to be distressed.”

But Liu Bei was still worried, and Zhuge Liang was long in calming him down and explaining away his anxiety.

As Zhuge Liang was leaving the palace he met Xu Jing, who said, “I just now went to your residence to report a secret piece of news but I was told you had been summoned by our lord. So I followed you here.”

“What is it?”

“There is a report that Lu Meng has seized Jingzhou and Guan Yu is dead.”

“I saw a large star fall over the land above Jingzhou, and I knew some evil had befallen Yun-chang. But I dared not mention it to our lord lest he would be worried.”

As the two were talking there suddenly emerged a man from inside the hall, who seized Zhuge Liang by the sleeve and cried, “Why did you conceal such terrible news from me?”

Zhuge Liang turned to see who the speaker was. It was Liu Bei.

The two of them tried their best to console him. “What we said just now is only a rumor and cannot be regarded as truth,” they said. “Pray do not be distressed.”

“Yun-chang and I pledge to live and die together—how can I go on living if he is no more?”

The two men soothed their lord as best they could, but even as they spoke one of the attendants came to say that Ma Liang and Yi Ji had arrived from Jingzhou. Liu Bei at once called them in and questioned them. They said Jingzhou was indeed lost, and Guan Yu begged for instant help. Then they presented Guan Yu’s letter, but before there was time to read it Liao Hua’s arrival was announced. He was immediately summoned. Liao Hua prostrated himself and, weeping, related in detail how Liu Feng and Meng Da refused to send help to Guan Yu.

“Then my brother is lost!” cried Liu Bei in anguish.

“How very impudent these two were! Even death is not enough to punish them for their crime!” said Zhuge Liang. “But do not worry, my lord. I myself will lead an army to the rescue.”

“If Yun-chang is gone, I cannot live,” moaned Liu Bei. “Tomorrow I will set out with an army to rescue him.”

Without a moment’s delay Liu Bei sent a messenger to inform Zhang Fei of all this and at the same time muster an army for instant departure.

Before dawn, one-by-one several messengers arrived, relating by degrees the heartrending tragedy of Guan Yu’s night journey to Lingju, his capture by men of Wu, his dauntless refusal to submit, and the heroic death of the father and son.

When he heard the terrible news, Liu Bei uttered a great cry and fell unconscious to the ground.

His mind went back to the pledge of days gone by;
How could he live still while his brother died?

What happened to Liu Bei will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* This happened during the days of the period of Spring and Autumn. Huai Ying, daughter of the ruler of Qin, first married the son of Duke Huai of Jin and later married Duke Wen of Jin, who was the granduncle of her first husband.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-EIGHT

Treating Cao Cao, Hua Tuo Dies in Prison

On His Deathbed Cao Cao Leaves His Last Words

At the end of the last chapter, the Prince of Hanzhong fainted on hearing the terrible news of the death of Guan Yu and his son. His officials ran to his aid. After quite a long time he came to and was helped to his chamber.

"My lord, control your grief," said Zhuge Liang. "Life and death are fixed by fate. Yun-chang was too inflexible and proud, which brought him the misfortune of today. You must now take care of your health and gradually make your plans for vengeance."

"When we swore brotherhood in the Peach Garden, we pledged to live and die together. How can I enjoy riches and honors alone now that my brother is gone?"

At that moment Guan Yu's son, Guan Xing, came in, wailing loudly. At the sight of the youth, Liu Bei again uttered a great cry and again fainted. By and by he came to, but during the whole day he kept weeping and swooning at intervals. For three days he refused all nourishment, and he wept so bitterly that his garments became blood-stained. Zhuge Liang and the

others tried every means to soothe him, but he was inconsolable.

“I swear I will not live under the same sun and moon as Sun Quan,” he cried.

“They say that Sun Quan has sent the head of your brother to Cao Cao, but Cao Cao has buried the remains with the rites of a prince,” said Zhuge Liang.

“What does this mean?” asked Liu Bei.

“Well, that was Wu’s plan to divert your anger toward Cao Cao; but he saw through the subterfuge and so buried your brother with great honor, so that your anger may burn against Wu.”

“I will send my army to punish Wu and appease my wrath at once,” said Liu Bei.

“No, you must not do that. At present Wu wishes you to smite Wei, and Wei wishes you to attack Wu, each harboring the malevolent design of taking advantage of the quarrel. It is imperative, My Lord, to keep your army at home now. First prepare the funeral for Guan Yu, and wait till Wei and Wu are at war. That will be your time.”

The others supported Zhuge Liang, and Liu Bei finally began to take food again. An edict was issued throughout Shu enjoining officers of all ranks and their men to wear mourning garb. The prince himself went outside the south gate to summon the spirit home and to offer sacrifices. For another whole day he wailed for the deceased warrior, his brother.

Although Cao Cao had given an honorable burial to the remains of Guan Yu, he was continually haunted by the dead man's spirit. Every night when he closed his eyes he saw Guan Yu, just as he knew him in the flesh. These visions scared him, and he sought the advice of his officials, who said that the old buildings might be haunted and suggested erecting a new residence.

"I want to build one and name it Jianshi," said Cao Cao. "But there are no good architects."

They told him that there was an architect, Su Yue by name, who was noted for his highly creative art. He was sent for and asked to work on the plans of this building. When Sun Yue presented the sketch of a nine-hall palace with pavilions and chambers, corridors and verandahs, Cao Cao was very much pleased.

"That is exactly what I want. But can you find the right timber for such a building?"

"I know a certain tree that will serve the purpose," said the architect. "About thirty li from the city there is a pool called the Leaping Dragon, in front of which is a shrine. Beside that grows a fine pear tree about a hundred feet high, which will serve very well."

Cao Cao at once sent men to fell the tree. But after one whole day's labor, the workmen came back to say they could make no impression on it either with saw or ax. Cao Cao, incredulous, went there to see for himself. When he had dismounted and stood by the tree he could not but admire its size and proportions, as it towered above him, straight and

without branches, till the wide-spreading and symmetrical top reached into the clouds. But he commanded the men again to fell it.

Several aged villagers came to plead with him. “This tree has stood here for centuries and is the haunt of some divine spirits,” they said. “Perhaps you should not cut it down.”

Cao Cao flared up. “For over forty years there has been no one, from the emperor to the commoner, who does not fear me wherever I go. Which spirit is this that dares to oppose my wishes?”

Drawing the sword he was wearing, he went up to the tree and slashed at its trunk. The tree groaned as he struck, and blood spattered all over his robe. Terror-stricken, he threw down the sword, mounted his horse, and galloped back to his palace.

But that night when he retired to rest he could not sleep. He rose at the second watch, went into the outer room, and sat resting by a low table. Suddenly there appeared a man dressed in black and carrying a sword, his hair flying about his shoulders. The man stopped in front of him and, pointing at him, cried out: “Behold the spirit of the pear tree. You intend to usurp the throne so you desire to build the new palace, but how dare you try to cut my sacred tree! I know your days are numbered and I have come to slay you.”

“Where are the guards? Come quickly!” called Cao Cao in terror.

The figure struck him with his sword. Cao Cao cried out and then awoke. It was a dream but his head ached terribly.

The pain was so severe that he could not stand it. The best physicians were immediately called in to treat him but they failed to relieve the terrible pain. All his subordinates were worried for his health.

Hua Qin said to his master, “My lord, have you heard of Hua Tuo?”

“Do you mean the doctor who cured Zhou Tai?”

“Yes, the same,” replied Hua Qin.

“I have heard of his fame, but I do not know how capable he is in his art.”

“His art in medicine has no match. If one is ill and calls him in he knows immediately whether to use drugs, or the needle, or the cautery, and the patient finds relief at once. When one suffers from an internal complaint and drugs are ineffectual, with a dose of anesthesia he throws the patient into a state of perfect insensibility and then opens the abdomen and washes the affected organs with a medicament. The patient feels no pain. When the cleansing is complete, he sews up the wound with thread, dresses it, and in a month or less the wound is healed. It is just as wonderful as that!

“One day he was walking along the road when he heard a man groaning with pain. ‘That is dyspepsia,’ he said. Further questions confirmed the diagnosis. He prescribed the juice of garlic as an emetic, and the man vomited a long worm. After

this he was quite well. There was also the case of the prefect of Guangling, who suffered from a heavy feeling of the heart. His face was red and congested, and he had no appetite. Hua Tuo gave him a drug, and he threw up many wriggling parasites with red heads. The prefect asked him what had caused the illness, and the doctor told him that he ate too much strong-smelling fish. He could cure him this once, but in three years the disease would recur, and then nothing could save him. And truly enough, three years later the prefect died. Another man had a tumor between the eyes, and it itched intolerably. Hua Tuo examined it and said there was a bird inside it. All laughed at him when they heard his diagnosis. The tumor was then opened, and surely enough, a canary flew out. The patient was relieved. Yet another time a man was bitten on the toe by a dog, and two growths ensued, one of which itched intolerably and the other caused severe pain. Hua Tuo said the painful one contained ten pins, and the other a couple of wei-chi pips. No one believed him until after the two swellings were opened and these exact things were found. He is really of the same class of doctors as Bian Que* and Cang Gong.† He lives at Jincheng, not too far from here. Why not send for him?"

So Hua Tuo was summoned. As soon as he arrived he felt Cao Cao's pulse and made a careful examination. Then he said to Cao Cao, "Your headaches are due to a malignant tumor in the skull. As the tumor is deep inside, swallowing drugs is futile. I propose to administer a dose of anesthesia, then open the skull and remove the tumor. That will eliminate the root of your headaches."

"You want to kill me?" cried Cao Cao angrily.

“Sir, have you heard how I cured Guan Yu of his wounded arm? The poison had penetrated into the bones and I scraped them to cure him, and he did not flinch a moment. Your malady is trifling—why do you mistrust me?”

“A painful arm may be scraped, but how can you cut open a man’s head? You must be intimate with Guan Yu and you are trying to take this opportunity to kill me in revenge for his death.”

He told his guards to throw Huo Tuo into jail and have him tortured to find out who his accomplices were. Jia Xu pleaded for the physician on account of his rare skill, but his intervention was of no avail, for Cao Cao was convinced that the physician was just another Ji Ping (see Chapter Twenty-Three) and wanted to take this chance to kill him. He ordered his men to press on with the interrogation.

One of the jailers was named Wu, and was known to everyone as Wu the Jailer. Out of respect for the doctor he saw to it that he was well fed.

Huo Tuo, grateful for his kindness, said to him one day, “I am doomed, I know. My only regret is that my Blue Book of medicine will be lost to later generations. You have been most kind to me, and as I have no other way of recompensing you, I will give you a letter for my wife, telling her to bring me the Blue Book, and I will give it to you so that you may continue my work.”

Wu the jailer rejoiced greatly, saying, “If I have this book I will give up this menial position of jailer and travel about the

country healing the sick, so as to carry on your work and spread your virtue and reputation."

Huo Tuo wrote the letter and gave it to Wu, who lost no time in going to the doctor's house and bringing back the Blue Book. After Huo Tuo had read through the book carefully, he presented it to his jailer, who hid it at his home.

Ten days after this, Huo Tuo died in prison. Wu the jailer bought a coffin and had him buried. Then he quit his job and went home, intending to make a thorough study of the book. But when he got back he found, to his horror, his wife putting the very book on the fire. He hastened forward to snatch it away, but what was left of the book amounted only to a couple of pages. Exasperated, he vented his fury in cursing his wife.

She retorted: "What's the use of that book? Even if you can learn to become such a skillful doctor as Huo Tuo, you will only end up dying in prison like him."

It struck Wu the jailer that there was something in what she said, and he ceased grumbling at her. However, the final outcome of this episode was that the learning in the Blue Book was forever lost to the world, for what was left only contained a few operations concerning domestic animals.

Huo Tuo was the ablest of leeches;
And his diagnoses topped them all.
Alas! that he died, and his Blue Book
Is lost forever to the sight of all.

After the death of the doctor Cao Cao became worse, and his worries over his rivals in Wu and Shu further aggravated his illness. One day when he was preoccupied with thoughts of his enemies an envoy from Wu came with a letter from Sun Quan, which ran as follows:

"Your servant Sun Quan has long noted that Heaven means you, sir, to be the supreme ruler and looks forward to your early accession to the throne. With your army you will destroy Liu Bei and quash rebellion in the west. When that time comes, your servant will lead all his subordinates to submit the land of Wu to you."

Cao Cao laughed as he read this. Then he showed the letter to his followers, saying, "That youth is trying to put me on a furnace!"

But they replied seriously, "The Hans have been feeble too long, while your virtue and merits are as high as the mountains. You are the one person that all the people look up to for leadership. Now even Sun Quan acknowledges himself as your servant. This shows that people of contrary influences are working to a common end. It is time you responded to the will of God and the desire of men and ascend the throne."

Cao Cao smiled. "I have served the Hans for many years, and though I have acquired some merit, yet I have been rewarded with a princedom, the highest rank for me. I dare not aspire to even greater things. If Heaven has chosen me, then will I be as King Wen of Zhou."*

Sima Yi put forward a proposal. "As Sun Quan declares himself your servant and promises obedience, you, My Lord,

can confer a title upon him and assign to him the duty of attacking Liu Bei."

As a result of his proposal Sun Quan was created General of Cavalry and Marquis of Nanchang, in charge of the governorship of Jingzhou.

However, Cao Cao's condition worsened from day to day. One night he had a dream of three horses feeding out of the same manger. The next day he told this to Jia Xu, saying that he suspected Ma (meaning horse) Teng and his sons had something to do with it. "But Ma Teng is already dead," he added. "How do you interpret the dream?"

"Horses are auspicious," replied Jia Xu. "And to dream of horses coming to feed in the manger is a good sign. I do not think you need feel any misgivings."

Cao Cao was comforted.

Cao dreamed three steeds together fed,
The vision seers could not explain.
None guessed how soon, when Cao was dead,
Another dynasty† would rule the land.
Ah, yes; Cao Cao had vainly wrought;
Of none avail each wicked wile,
For, later, in Wei court, there fought
Against him one with equal guile.

That night Cao Cao became worse. As he lay on his couch he felt dizzy, so he got up to rest against a table. Suddenly a shrieking noise rose like the tearing of silk. Peering into the darkness, he perceived with horror the bloody forms of many

of his victims—the Empress, her two children and her father, Lady Dong, Dong Cheng, and the others—all standing in the gray clouds and whispering a demand for his life. He hastily threw his sword wildly into the air. Crash! And the southwest corner of the palace came down, and with the fall Cao Cao collapsed to the floor. His attendants helped him up and bore him to another building, where he might nurse his health in peace.

But he could find no peace. The next night he was disturbed by the ceaseless wailing of both male and female voices. When day dawned, Cao Cao sent for his followers and said to them: "Thirty years and more have I spent in the turmoil of war and have always refused to believe in things supernatural. But why am I like this now?"

"You should summon Taoist priests to offer sacrifices and prayers," they said.

Cao Cao sighed. "The wise man said, 'He who offends Heaven has no one to pray to.' I feel that my fate is sealed and my days are at their end. There is no remedy."

So he would not consent to call in the priests. The next day his condition deteriorated even further and his vision became impaired. Hastily he sent for Xiahou Dun, who came at once. But as he drew near the gate he, too, saw the same group of shadowy forms of the slain victims of Cao Cao's cruelty. Overcome with fear, he fell to the ground. He was helped to his home but the incident left him a nervous wreck for the rest of his life.

Then Cao Cao called in his trusted followers, among whom were Cao Hong, Chen Qun, Jia Xu, and Sima Yi, that they might hear his last wishes. Cao Hong, speaking for the group, said, "My lord, take good care of your precious self and you will recover soon."

But Cao Cao said, "Thirty and more years have I ruled the land and many a bold man has fallen before me. The only ones that remain are Sun Quan and Liu Bei. These two have not yet been destroyed. Now I am very ill, and I cannot be with you any more. Therefore I want to leave my family matters in your care. My first son, born of Lady Liu, unfortunately died young in battle. Now Lady Bian bore me four sons, as you know. The third one, Zhi, is my favorite, but he is vain and insincere, too fond of wine, and too undisciplined. Therefore he is not named my heir. My second son, Zhang, is valiant but imprudent. The fourth, Xiong, is weakly and may not live long. My eldest, Pi, is steady and serious, fit to succeed me, and I look to you to support him."

Cao Hong and the others wept as they recorded his final wishes. After they left, Cao Cao told his servants to bring the rare spices that he had accumulated over the years and distributed them among his waiting maids, to whom he said: "After my death you must diligently attend to your womanly skills. You can make silken shoes for sale, and so earn your own living."

He also told them to go on living in the Bronze Bird Tower. Every day they were to administer a sacrifice for him and present the eatables before his tablet, to the accompaniment of music by female musicians.

To avoid his remains being dug up, he commanded that seventy-two false tombs be built near Jiangwu in Zhangde Prefecture, so that no one should know his actual burying place. And when these final orders had been given he heaved a deep sigh and wept, tears rolling down his cheeks like rain. A moment later he died. He was sixty-six, and the time was the first month of the twenty-fifth year of the period Jian An (A.D. 210).

A certain poet composed the following song in memory of Cao Cao:

I stood in Ye and saw the Zhang River
Go gliding by. Methought no common man
E'er rose from such a place. Or he was great
In war, a poet, or an artist skilled.
Perchance a model minister, or son,
Or famous for fraternal duty shown.
The thoughts of heroes are not ours to judge,
Nor are their actions for our eyes to see.
The man may be the first in merit, yet
His crimes may brand him chief of criminals;
And so his reputation is fair and foul.
His literary gifts may bear the mark
Of genius; he may be a ruler born,
But this is certain: he will stand above
His fellows, herding not with common men.
Takes he the field, then is he bold in fight;
Would he a mansion build, a palace springs.
In all things great, his genius masters him.
And such was Cao Cao. He could never be
Obedient; he a rebel was, foredoomed.
He seized and ruled, but hungered for power more;

Became a prince, and still was not content.
And yet this man of glorious career
When gripped by sickness, wept as might a child.
Full well he knew, when on the bed of death,
That all is vanity and nothing worth.
His latest acts were kindly. Simple gifts
Of fragrant spices gave he to his maids.
Alas!
The ancients' splendid deeds or secret thoughts
We may not measure against our puny rule.
But criticize them, pedants, as you may
The mighty dead will smile at what you say.

As Cao Cao breathed his last the whole of those present raised a great wailing and lamentation. The news was sent to the four sons Pi, Zhang, Zhi, and Xiong. They wrapped the body in a shroud, then laid it in a golden coffin and enclosed it in a silver shell, which was sent at once to his home in Yejun.

The eldest son wept aloud at the sad tidings and went out with a big following of officials to meet the procession on the road and escort the body of his father into his home. The coffin was laid in a side hall. Dressed in mourning attire, all the officials wailed together in the hall.

Suddenly, one man stood out from the crowd of mourners and cried, "I would request the heir to cease lamentation and devote himself to the present needs of the state." It was Sima Fu, who continued: "The death of the prince will cause a great upheaval in the empire, and it is essential that the heir should assume his dignity without loss of time. This is not the time to weep."

The others replied, “We know it is imperative to set up the heir, but without the Emperor’s edict, how can we proceed with the investiture?”

“The prince died away from home,” said Chen Jiao, Minister of War. “If his favorite son, Zhi, should presume to set himself up as heir, dangerous disputes will ensue.”

So saying he slashed off part of the sleeve of his robe with his sword and shouted fiercely, “I request the heir to assume the rank of Prince of Wei here and now. Any one of you who does not agree, let him fall like the cut sleeve.”

Fear gripped the whole assembly. Suddenly it was announced that Hua Qin had come post haste from the capital. All were surprised at his sudden arrival. Soon he entered the hall and said, “The Prince of Wei is dead and the country is in a commotion—why not set up his successor as soon as possible?”

They replied, “As the Emperor’s edict cannot be obtained at the moment, we have been considering using the princess-consort’s order to set up the heir as the new prince.”

“I have procured the imperial edict here,” he cried, pulling it out from his breast.

They all began to congratulate him. And he read the edict.

Now Hua Qin had always been a servile stooge of Wei, and so he drafted this edict and forced the Emperor to agree to confer honorable titles to Cao Pi. Therefore Cao Pi was

created “Prince of Wei, Prime Minister of the State, and Governor of Jizhou.”

Cao Pi assumed his new role as prince and received the congratulations of all the officials of the court. This was followed by a banquet.

However, the succession was not to pass too smoothly. While the banquet was in progress news came that Cao Zhang, with an army of 100,000 men, was approaching.

Startled, the new prince turned to his courtiers and said, “What is to be done? This younger brother of mine has always been strong-minded. He is also skilled in the art of war. His coming here with a large army can only mean he wants to contest with me for the inheritance.”

“Let me go and see the marquis—I can make him desist,” said one of the courtiers.

The others cried, “Yes, you are the only one, sir, that can avert this danger!”

Quarrel ’tween two sons of Cao Cao
Just as in the House of Yuan Shao.

Who the mediator was will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Famous physician in the Warring States Period.

† Famous physician in West Han.

* Leader of the House of Zhou at the end of the Shang Dynasty (sixteenth to eleventh century B.C.), who conquered several neighboring kingdoms and expanded his territory. His son, King Wu of Zhou, later destroyed the Shang dynasty and founded the Zhou Dynasty, which lasted for over eight hundred years until it was overthrown by Qin in 256 B.C.

† An allusion to the Dynasty of Jin of the House of Sima, whose name also contains “ma” (horse).

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

Cao Pi Presses His Brother Zhi to Improvise Poems

Liu Feng Is Executed for Failing to Rescue His Uncle

The last chapter closed when Cao Pi was alarmed to hear of the arrival of his younger brother, Cao Zhang, with a large army. At that moment one of the officials stood up and volunteered to go and persuade him to submit. All eyes turned toward the speaker, Jia Kui, and he was at once commanded to undertake the mission. So he went out of the city to see Cao Zhang, who came quickly to the point.

"Where is the late prince's seal of office?" he asked.

Jia Kui replied sternly, "In every household there is the eldest son and in every state there is the heir-apparent. Such a question from you, sir, is inappropriate."

Cao Zhang fell silent, unable to come up with an answer. Presently he went into the city with the envoy. Before entering the palace Jia Kui asked him whether he had come as a mourner of his father or as a rival claimant of his elder brother.

"I have come to mourn my father's death. There is no other motive."

“If so, why do you bring your soldiers?”

At this reproach Cao Zhang ordered his escort to retire and entered the city alone. When the brothers met they fell into each other’s arms and wept. Then the younger brother yielded command of all his following, and was directed to go back to guard his own fief. He obediently withdrew.

Cao Pi, being now firmly established, changed the name of the period from Jian An to Yan-Kang, or “Prolonged Repose.” He gave the highest ranks to Jia Xu, Hua Qin, and Wang Lang and promoted all his officials. To his father, Cao Cao, he conferred the posthumous title of Wu Wang, or “Prince of War,” and buried him in Yejun. He appointed Yu Jin warden of the mausoleum, but with malevolent intent, for when Yu Jin reached his post he found the walls of the rooms decorated with sketches depicting the drowning of his seven armies and the capture of himself by Guan Yu. Seated in a higher place, Guan Yu looked very dignified; Pang De, angry and unyielding, refused to bow to the victor; while he himself, kneeling in the dust, pleaded for his life. These sketches were painted on purpose at the orders of Cao Pi to openly shame Yu Jin, who despised the latter for his fear of death after being captured and his return following betrayal. When Yu Jin saw the pictures, shame and rage alternately took possession of him. Soon he fell ill and died.

A loyal follower for thirty years,
Yet fell traitor in peril out of fear.
None can know another’s heart,
Drawing tigers, with bones start.

One day Hua Qin went to see the new prince and said, "Your brother Cao Zhang has handed over to you his army and returned to his post, but your other two brothers did not even come to attend the funeral of their father. Their misconduct should be condemned."

Cao Pi acted on the suggestion and sent a commissioner to each brother. One of the envoys quickly returned to say that his youngest brother, afraid of being punished for his fault, had committed suicide. Cao Pi ordered an honorable burial for him and gave him the posthumous title of prince.

Soon after, the other envoy returned with the following tale: "Your brother Zhi, Marquis of Linzi, is drinking daily with two brothers named Ding. They were very rude. When I presented myself, the marquis sat bolt upright, and the two Dings spoke very insultingly. One of them said: 'The late prince intended our lord to succeed, but was prevented by the slanderous tongues of wicked ministers. Now the late prince has only recently passed away, yet your master begins to think of punishing his own flesh and blood.' The other brother also chimed in, saying, 'In intellect our lord leads the age, and he ought to have been heir to his father. You and your bunch of courtiers, how can you be so ignorant as to fail to recognize a genius?' And then the marquis, in a fit of anger, ordered his guards to drive me out with rods."

This treatment of his messenger annoyed Cao Pi greatly, and he dispatched a force under Xu Zhu to arrest his brother and all his subordinates. When Xu Zhu arrived he found the marquis and the two Dings dead drunk; so he bound them, as well as all the other officials, put them into carts, and sent them to his new master.

Cao Pi's first order was to put to death the two Dings and the other officials. Both the Ding brothers were renowned men of letters, and many were sorry for their untimely death.

Cao Pi's mother, Lady Bien, was grieving over the suicide of her youngest son when she heard the startling news that her third son Zhi had been arrested and his retinue put to death. She left her chamber in haste to see her eldest son. Seeing his mother, the prince quickly made his obeisance.

Weeping, she said, "Your brother has always had a weakness for wine, for he considers himself talented in learning and so is inclined to having his own way. I hope you won't forget he is your brother and that I bore you both. Spare his life that I may close my eyes in peace when I die."

"I also admire his talent, Mother, and have no intention to hurt him. All I want is to reform him. Have no anxiety."

So the mother, still weeping, withdrew. Cao Pi then summoned his brother.

Hua Qin said, "Has the dowager been interceding for your brother's life?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Your brother is too clever to be content to remain in an inferior status. If you do not remove him as soon as possible he will do you harm."

"I cannot disobey my mother's command."

“People say your brother simply speaks in fine prose or verse. I do not believe it myself. You can put him to test, my lord. If he fails to live up to his reputation you can slay him—if he does, then exile him. That will stop the complaints of all the scholars of the land.”

Cao Pi took his advice. Soon Cao Zhi came, bowed low before his elder brother in trepidation, and admitted his fault.

The elder brother said, “Though we are brothers, yet the proper relation between us of prince and his subject must not be overlooked. How dare you behave so disrespectfully? While our father was alive you often boasted of your literary genius and showed off your writing, but I am disposed to think that you are a fraud and you have made use of another’s pen. Now I want you to compose a poem within the time taken to walk seven paces, and I will spare your life if you succeed. If you fail, then I will punish you even more harshly.”

“Will you suggest a theme?” asked Cao Zhi.

Now there was hanging in the hall a painting of two bulls fighting at the foot of a wall, and one of them falling dead into a well. Cao Pi pointed to the painting and said, “Take that as the subject. But you are forbidden to use such words as ‘Two bulls fight under a wall’ or ‘One bull fell dead into a well.’”

Cao Zhi took seven paces and then recited this poem:

Two animals plod homeward to their barns,
Each bore on his head curving bones,

By the foot of a hill they met,
And they fell into a dissent.
But unmatched in firmness of heart,
One soon lay below a hollow in the dirt.
‘Twas not that they were of unequal might
Though wrathful both, one did not strength exert.

This exhibition of skill amazed his brother and the whole court. Unwilling to acknowledge defeat, Cao Pi thought of another test, so he ordered his brother to improvise on the theme of their fraternal relationship—but again the words “brotherhood” or “brother” were not allowed to occur in the poem. Without seeming to reflect, Cao Zhi came up with this rhyme:

They were boiling beans on a beanstalk fire;
Came a plaintive voice from the pot,
“Oh why, since we sprang from the selfsame root,
Should you press me with anger hot?”

The allusion in this verse to the cruel treatment of one member of a family by another was not lost upon Cao Pi, and he dropped a few silent tears.

The mother of both men came out at this moment from her abiding place and said, “Should the elder brother oppress the younger one so?”

The prince hastened to rise from his seat and said to his mother, “The laws of the state cannot be nullified.”

Cao Zhi was degraded to the rank of Marquis of Anxiang. He bowed to take his leave and left his brother’s court at once.

Cao Pi's accession was followed by a set of new laws and new commands. His behavior toward the Emperor was even more intemperate than his father's had ever been.

Reports of his harshness reached Chengdu and Liu Bei, much frightened, summoned his counselors to discuss what he should do. He said, "Since the death of Cao Cao and the accession of his son the life of the Emperor has changed for the worse. Now Sun Quan in Wu acknowledges his submission to Wei. I am disposed to destroy Sun Quan first in revenge for the death of my brother and then proceed to the north and purge the whole land of rebellion. What do you think of this?"

Hearing his words, Liao Hua stepped out and threw himself before him. Weeping bitterly he said, "Liu Feng and Meng Da were the true cause of the death of General Guan and his son; both these renegades deserve death."

Liu Bei was of the same opinion and was going to send someone to arrest them at once, but here Zhuge Liang intervened.

"No, that is not the right way—go slowly or you may stir up strife," he advised. "First promote these two and separate them. Then arrest them."

Liu Bei saw the prudence of this procedure and acted accordingly. He appointed Liu Feng prefect of Mianzhu, to separate the two malcontents.

Now Peng Yang was a good friend of Meng Da's. Hearing what was afoot, he hastened home, wrote a letter, and sent a

trusty person to bear it to Meng Da to warn him of the impending danger. However, the messenger was caught by Ma Chao's patrolling guards just as he was leaving the south gate of the city and taken before Ma Chao, who thus got hold of the letter. He then went to Peng Yang's house, where, nothing being suspected, he was received kindly and treated with wine.

The two drank for some time. Then Ma Chao, considering his host sufficiently off his guard, said provocatively, "The Prince of Hanzhong used to look on you with great favor—why is it that he doesn't seem to treat you so well as before?"

The host began to rave against his master. "That old leather!* But I will find some way to avenge myself."

To sound him further Ma Chao led him on, saying, "To tell the truth, I have long had a grudge against him, too."

"Then you can join Meng Da in attacking him from without, while I muster the men of Shu to smite him from within. We will be able to destroy him," proposed Peng Yang.

"That's an excellent plan, but let us talk it over again some other time," said Ma Chao as he took his leave.

Taking with him the captured man and the letter he carried, he proceeded to see Liu Bei, to whom he related the whole story. Liu Bei was very angry and at once had Peng Yang arrested and put into prison, where he was interrogated and tortured. While in prison Peng Yang regretted very much what he had said, but it was too late.

Liu Bei asked his advisor, “Peng Yang meant to turn traitor. How should I punish him?”

Zhuge Liang replied, “Although that fellow is but a conceited scholar, he may eventually stir up trouble if you leave him alive.”

Therefore an order was given to put Peng Yang to death in jail. When the news of his friend’s death reached Meng Da, he was frightened. On top of this, an envoy came at the time to announce Liu Feng’s promotion and transfer to Mianzhu, which scared him even more. So he sought advice from Shen Dan, the former prefect, and his brother Shen Yi.

He said to them, “My friend Fa Zheng and I did a great service to the Prince of Hanzhong. But now Fa Zheng is dead and the prince, forgetting my former service, wishes to harm me. What can I do?”

Shen Dan replied, “I have a plan to secure your safety.”

Pleased to hear this, Meng Da asked him eagerly, “What is it?”

“Well, my brother and I have long desired to go over to Wei. You can send a resignation to the Prince of Hanzhong and offer yourself to the Prince of Wei, who will certainly give you a high office. Then we two will follow.”

Meng Da saw that this was his best course, so he prepared a petition and asked the messenger who had brought the dispatch of Liu Feng’s transfer to take it to the Prince of Hanzhong. That night he left his post and went to Wei.

The messenger returned to Chengdu, told the prince of Meng Da's desertion, and handed over the petition. Liu Bei was very angry. He tore open the letter and read:

> In the humble opinion of your servant, sir, you have set out to accomplish a task comparable with that of Yi Yin and Lu Shang, and to walk in the meritorious footsteps of the kings Huan and Wen from the ancient days. While residing in the territory of Wu, your great design was already roughly hewn. Therefore many men of ability came in throngs to join you. Since I entered your service I have committed many faults; and if I recognize them myself, how much more must have been noticed by you! Now, sir, you are surrounded by gifted men, while I, useless as a helper in state administration and inept as a general in commanding an army, would be ashamed were I to take a place among them.
>
> It is well known that Fan Li* went sailing on the five lakes after helping his lord destroy his enemy, and Jiu Fan,† who had followed his master for nineteen years in exile, bade farewell to him on the river just when he was returning home. Why did both of them want to leave at the moment of success? It was to depart while clean and untainted. Now I am merely a man of humble origin, without any merit, and have been put in my present status by circumstances. Filled with admiration of the ancient sages, I have long desired to retire from my post. In the days of old, Shen Sheng, though perfectly filial, incurred the suspicions of his father and died; Zixu,* though

absolutely loyal, was put to death by his lord. Meng Tian,† though he expanded the territory of his country, suffered the extreme penalty; and Yue Yi, though he assisted his lord to destroy Qi, was the victim of calumny. Whenever I read about these men I am moved to tears, and now I am in the same situation I feel all the more mortified.

Lately Jingzhou was overwhelmed and many officers of high ranks failed in their duty. Only I remained in Fangling and Shangyong. Now I desire you, sir, to understand graciously, to sympathize with your servant, and to condone the step he is about to take. I am but a mean man, incapable of maintaining loyalty to the end. To do what I know is wrong does not lessen my crime. But as the saying goes, "No harsh words at the end of a friendship and no heart-burning on the departure of a subordinate." I wish, sir, these words will also be observed by you. I write this with extreme trepidation.

Liu Bei flared up in a rage. "That impudent traitor!" he cried. "How dare he taunt me by playing with words?"

He wanted to muster a force at once to seize the deserter, but Zhuge Liang said, "You had better send Liu Feng to capture him and let the two tigers wear themselves out. Whether Liu Feng succeeds or fails, he will have to come to the capital, and then you can remove him. Thus you can kill two birds with one stone."

Liu Bei took his advice. Orders were sent to Mianzhu, and Liu Feng obediently led out his men.

At that time Meng Da had gone to offer his service to Cao Pi. When he arrived Cao Pi was holding a great council of his officials. He was summoned before the new Prince of Wei, who asked, “Is this surrender of yours a fraud?”

Meng Da replied, “The Prince of Shu wants to kill me for failing to rescue Guan Yu. I have come out of fear and nothing else.”

However, Cao Pi was still in doubt. Just then it was reported that Liu Feng had come with a large army to attack Xiangyang and challenge Meng Da in particular to battle.

Cao Pi said, “If you are true in your submission, go to Xiangyang and bring me Liu Feng’s head. I will have no more doubt.”

Meng Da replied, “There is no need to fight. I will convince him by argument and persuade him to surrender too.”

Cao Pi was pleased and so Meng Da was given several honorable titles and sent to guard Xiangyang. Now two Wei generals, Xiahou Shang and Xu Huang, were already in the city, with the intention of subduing the neighboring districts. Meng Da arrived, met his two new colleagues, and was told that Liu Feng was camped fifty li from the city. Therefore he wrote to his former colleague urging him to surrender. But Liu Feng was in no mood to listen to him this time—instead, he tore up the letter and put the messenger to death.

“The renegade has already made me neglect my duty to my uncle, and now he even wants to alienate me from my father! He tries to reduce me to a disloyal and unfilial son,” cried Liu

Feng in wrath. The next day he led out his army to challenge. Meng Da went out with his army to meet him. Liu Feng rode to the front, pointed with his sword at his opponent, and railed at him.

"Death is poised on your head," replied Meng Da, "yet you are still blind enough not to see it."

Liu Feng rode out, flourishing his sword. He engaged Meng Da, who ran away before the fight developed. Liu Feng pursued hotly for a great distance. Then he fell into an ambush and found himself attacked on two sides. At this Meng Da also turned back to join the battle. Liu Feng was forced to fly toward Shangyong, pursued all the way by his enemy. When he reached the city and hailed the gate he was met by a volley of arrows.

"I have surrendered to Wei," cried Shen Dan from the city tower.

In his rage Liu Feng wanted to attack the city, but as the army of Wei was close behind, he could make no stand and had to set off for Fangling. When he arrived there, however, he found the banners of Wei all along the walls. Then he saw Shen Yi signal from the tower, and at once there appeared from behind the wall a body of men led by Xu Huang.

Unable to withstand him, Liu Feng fled westward for home and Xu Huang took advantage to pursue. By the time Liu Feng had returned to Chengdu, he had only a handful of men remaining.

He went in to see his father to whom he, kneeling and weeping, related what had happened in detail. But to his pleading Liu Bei showed no sign of sympathy.

“Shameful son!” cried Liu Bei. “Are you brazen enough to come and see me?”

“I did want to rescue my uncle from his mishap but Meng Da prevented me from doing so by his persuasive tongue.”

“You eat as a man, you dress as a man, and you are not an image of clay or wood! Did you have no sense of a man? How could you listen to the slanderous tongue of a renegade?”

Liu Bei ordered him to be put to death. But he felt some regret later when he heard of how Liu Feng had torn up Meng Da’s letter and killed his messenger when the latter had tried to induce him to surrender. This and his grief for the death of his brother afflicted him so much that he fell ill. So no military campaign was launched.

After his accession to princedom, Cao Pi promoted the whole court to higher ranks and rewarded them with gifts. Soon afterwards, escorted by an army of 300,000 men, he went southward to inspect his home town of Jiaojun in Peiguo and offered prodigious sacrifices at his ancestors’ tombs. Villagers lined the roads, presenting him with cups of wine to welcome him in simulation of the respect accorded the founder of Han when he returned home to Pei.

Then a report came to say that the faithful Xiahou Dun was dying and Cao Pi hastened back to Yejun, but arrived too late

to bid him farewell. He put on mourning for him and instituted an elaborate funeral ceremony to honor him.

In the late summer of that year various auspicious signs were reported: a phoenix seen to bow at Shiyi, a qi-lin* at Linzi, and a yellow dragon observed in Ye. Two high officials named Li Fu and Xu Zhi discussed the appearances of these rare animals, and putting them all together concluded that they presaged that Wei was about to supplant Han and the ceremony of abdication should be administered. Presently a deputation of some forty officials went into the palace to propose to Emperor Xian that he should abdicate and yield the throne to the Prince of Wei.

It is time to set up the throne of Wei,
And the end has come for the reign of Han.

How the Emperor would reply will be disclosed in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* A derogatory term for an old soldier, used here to abuse Liu Bei.

* A minister of the Kingdom of Yue in the period of Spring and Autumn, who helped his king defeat his enemy Wu.

† Uncle of King Wen of Jin in the period of Spring and Autumn, who accompanied his nephew in exile for nineteen years but declared his resignation when the king was making

a homeward journey. However, it was only a gesture to remind the king of his service.

* A minister of the Kingdom of Wu, who warned his master against the Kingdom of Yue but was put to death.

† A general of the Qin Dynasty.

* A legendary animal of good fortune, resembling a deer.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

Emperor Xian of Han Is Deposed by Cao Pi

Liu Bei Claims to be the True Successor of Han

Hua Qin was the spokesman of the deputation of officials that went into the palace. He said to Emperor Xian: “Since his accession, the Prince of Wei’s virtue has been acclaimed throughout the four corners of the empire and his humanity has reached every creature on earth. He is truly unmatched in all the ages, not even by the ancient rulers Tang and Yu. We, your servants, have taken counsel among ourselves and come to the conclusion that the fortune of Han is exhausted. Therefore we trust Your Majesty, in imitation of our earliest rulers Yao and Shun, will yield the throne and the empire to the Prince of Wei, thereby satisfying the will of Heaven and the hearts of men, and enabling yourself to enjoy the happiness of repose. Your abdication will be the greatest fortune for your ancestors and for all your subjects. Having thoroughly debated this matter, we have come to lay it before you.”

The Emperor listened in severe shock, and for a time could not reply. Then, weeping sadly, he looked at the assembly and pleaded, “How can I abandon my empire? It was won through such arduous struggles by my great ancestor, its founder, who, after destroying Qin and overwhelming Chu, established

the empire of Han, which has been handed down for four centuries. Though I do not possess remarkable talents, yet I have done no wrong. You must give this a just consideration."

Hua Qin led Li Fu and Xu Zhi forward and said, "If Your Majesty does not believe our words, pray ask these two, who will explain."

Li Fu said, "Since the Prince of Wei took office, several auspicious animals, like the qi-lin, the phoenix, and the yellow dragon have been sighted. The grain of felicity has flourished and sweet dew has watered the earth. All these augur that Heaven decrees a change and Wei must replace Han."

Xu Zhi continued, "My colleagues and I, watching the aspects of the sky at night, have noticed the gradual fading of the fortune of the Hans. Your Majesty's own star has become dim whereas the stars for Wei illumine the whole earth, indicating such prosperity that words are rendered impotent to describe it. These signs also coincide with an oracle which says:

'Ghost' at the side of 'sent',
For the Han, nothing to be said.
'Noon' in the east and 'word' in the west,
Two suns shine, one on the other set.*

"The interpretation is unmistakably: 'Wei at Xuchang is to inherit the throne of Han.' Your Majesty must consider this."

The Emperor said, "All these so-called auspicious signs and oracles are purely illusory. Is it reasonable that I should suddenly abandon my ancestral heritage for such illusions?"

Wang Lang, another high-ranking official, said: “Since ancient times, rise and fall have been the law of all things. Prosperity is inevitably followed by decline. Has any kingdom endured forever or any house never failed? The House of Han, handed down through four centuries to yourself, has lost its vigor and the time has come to yield. There must be no delay or calamity will ensue.”

Weeping loudly, the Emperor retired to his private chamber while the officials, laughing, also left the hall.

Next morning they assembled in the Audience Hall but the Emperor did not appear. So they sent some eunuchs to request his presence. Still he feared to show himself. Surprised, Empress Cao, daughter of Cao Cao, asked him why he did not attend the court as usual, especially when he was requested to go out.

“Because your brother wishes to depose me and become emperor himself. He has set the whole court against me to force me to abdicate.”

“How can my brother do such a dreadfully rebellious thing?” she said, indignantly.

Just as she spoke, Cao Hong and Cao Xiu, both armed, entered the chamber and requested His Majesty to proceed to the Audience Hall.

The Empress abused them. “This is exactly the doing of you rascals! For the sake of wealth and power for yourselves, you have conspired to rebel. My father, whose merits had overshadowed all in the whole land, never dared to aspire to

the sacred throne. But my brother, who has only just succeeded him, is so insatiable in his hunger for power that he intends to usurp the throne. Heaven will surely punish him!"

She wept bitterly as she went inside and the attendants also sobbed in sorrow. Then Cao Hong and Cao Xiu pressed the Emperor to go out into the hall, and at last he had to yield.

There, Hua Qin took up the issue of abdication again. "Your Majesty should do as we advised yesterday to avoid any misfortune."

The Emperor sobbed. "All of you have enjoyed the bounty of Han for years, and many among you are descendants of officials who rendered great services to the dynasty. How can you bring yourselves to act against all propriety toward your lord?"

"If Your Majesty refuses to follow our advice I fear misfortune is imminent. Once that happens, do not blame us for being disloyal."

"Who dares to murder me?" cried the Emperor.

Hua Qin shouted ferociously, "Everyone knows that Your Majesty does not have the attributes of a successful ruler and that is why the country is beset with troubles. Were it not for the presence of the Prince of Wei in your court, many a man would slay you. How can Your Majesty be so ungrateful? Is Your Majesty waiting for all men to rise against you?"

The Emperor, shocked at the violence of his language, shook out his sleeves and rose to go away. Wang Lang shot a

meaningful glance at Hua Qin, who rushed forward and seized the Emperor by the sleeve.

“Have you consented or not?” he glowered at the Emperor monstrously. “One word!”

The Emperor trembled with terror.

“Where is the keeper of the imperial seal?” shouted Cao Hong and Cao Xiu, drawing their swords.

“Here I am,” cried Zu Bi, keeper of the imperial seal, as he stepped calmly to the front.

They tried to force the seal from him, but he said, “The seal belongs to the Emperor. How dare you seek it from me?” Cao Hong ordered him to be put to death but, fearless, he abused the usurpers to his final breath.

Dethroned was the House of Han by wicked ministers,
Who falsely claimed to follow the deeds of Yu and Tang.
The crowd of officials at court were all on Wei’s side
Save one, the keeper of the seal, and loyally he died.

The Emperor trembled in abject fear, and when he saw the whole court full of armed men, all soldiers of Wei, he burst into tears.

“I will give up the throne to the Prince of Wei. Pray spare my feeble life and let me live out the few years Heaven has assigned me.” He wept as he spoke.

“The prince will not mistreat Your Majesty,” said Jia Xu. “Pray prepare the abdication document quickly to calm the people.”

Intimidated into submission, the Emperor told Chen Qun to draft the document. As soon as it was finished, Hua Qin, followed by the whole court, took it to the palace of the prince and presented it to Cao Pi together with the imperial seal. Cao Pi read the document with rapture.

> During the whole of my thirty-two years of reign the land has been in a state of turmoil, but the spirits of my ancestors have preserved me in the midst of danger. Now from the aspects of the sky and the hearts of the people I see that the rule of Han is exhausted and fortune has devolved upon the House of Wei, as can be seen from the success in war enjoyed by the late prince and the resplendent virtue of the present prince.
>
> By all noble principles the empire is no private possession, but a public trust. Therefore the great ruler Yao, to his eternal glory, did not yield his throne to his own son. How I admire this deed! Now in imitation of him I have resolved to abdicate and give my empire to my prime minister, the Prince of Wei, who will not, I hope, decline.

As soon as the document was read out Cao Pi stepped forth to accept the nomination. But Sima Yi said that although the edict and the seal had been sent, decorum demanded his refusal at first so as to silence criticism from the people. Cao Pi saw the wisdom of this advice and so ordered Wang Lang

to draft a memorial feigning a modest refusal of the offer on the ground of unfitness and asking that some other more capable personage be sought. When this reached the Emperor he was perplexed and asked the officials what he should do next.

Hua Qin replied, “When his father (Cao Cao) was offered the rank of prince he declined it thrice—but he finally accepted. Your Majesty should issue another edict to make the offer again and the prince will certainly accept.”

The Emperor had no other choice but to obey. So another official was requested to draft a second offer, which was again sent, together with the seal. The new edict read as follows:

To the Prince of Wei. You have modestly refused my offer to succeed the throne. But I have long been aware of the eclipse of the power of Han and I could only rely upon the support of the late prince, your father, who virtuously undertook the great task of removing evil forces and restoring peace to the land. Now you have succeeded your noble father. Already your virtue is resplendent, your fame universal, and your benevolence conveyed to the four seas and eight districts. The divine choice rests upon you. In the days of old, Shun rendered twenty meritorious services, so Emperor Yao abdicated and offered him the throne. Later Shun also abdicated and offered the kingdom to Yu the Great, who performed the magnificent service of taming the flooding river. Following the noble practice of Emperor Yao, it is a matter of obligation for the House of Han to yield its throne to the wise to ensure tranquillity of the Earth and manifest the command of Heaven.

“By the hand of Zhang Yin this edict is sent with the Emperor’s emblems and the imperial seal.”

Cao Pi was ecstatic when he received this. But upon second thought he said to Jia Xu, “Although I have received two such edicts, I fear that I may not escape being branded as a usurper by posterity.”

“That is easily arranged,” replied Jia Xu. “Direct Zhang Yin to take the seal back again and tell Hua Qin to make the Emperor set up an altar of abdication and select an auspicious day for the ceremony. Then assemble all the officials at the altar and tell the Emperor to offer the seal to you with his own hands and surrender the empire to Wei. That will clear away all doubts and silence any criticism.”

So the seal was once more returned with a memorial in modest language. The Emperor again inquired of the courtiers how he was to understand this second rejection.

Hua Qin said, “Your Majesty can set up an altar of abdication and assemble nobles, officials, and common people there to witness the prince’s succession to the throne. Then you and your descendants will receive favor from Wei.”

The Emperor consented. A site was soon chosen at Fanyang, where an altar of three stories was erected, and a propitious day in the tenth month was set out for the abdication. On the appointed day Emperor Xian requested Cao Pi to ascend the altar and receive his abdication. At the foot of the altar stood the officials, more than four hundred in all, and an enormous number of soldiers and the Imperial Tiger Guards. There the Emperor presented the seal to Cao Pi who took it in his hands.

Then all those about the altar knelt down to listen to the reading of the announcement of abdication.

> To the Prince of Wei. In days of old, Yao yielded the empire to Shun, and Shun in turn gave it to Yu. It is the will of Heaven to bestow the throne to the virtuous. The rule of Han has long lost its virility and the times are out of joint. When my turn came to rule, appalling chaos arose everywhere and the empire was in danger of being subverted by vicious warlords. I trusted to the military genius of the late Prince of Wei to restore order and purge the land of evil, whereby to preserve my House and ensure peace for my nine domains.
>
> The present prince has succeeded his father's great cause. He is resplendent in virtue, capable of accomplishing great tasks, and as magnanimous as his late father. Heaven shows auspicious signs; gods and men declare his worth. To him give the bright reward, and let him accept this mandate. All say his capabilities fit him to be the supreme ruler as the ancient sage Shun. Thus, as did my great predecessor Yao, I respectfully retire that you may be established. The revolution of Heaven brings the glory upon your person, and you will accept the highest office and comfort all men by reverently obeying the decree of Heaven.

The reading finished, Cao Pi proceeded to the altar and ascended to the place of the Emperor. Then Jia Xu, at the head of the great concourse of officials, came to the foot of the altar to bow to their new ruler. The title of the reign was

changed to Huang-Chu and the government became that of Great Wei. An edict was then published proclaiming a general amnesty, and the title of "Founder and Emperor Wu of Wei Dynasty" was conferred upon the late prince Cao Cao.

After that Hua Qin said, "As Heaven has but one sun, so the people can have but one ruler. The Hans have abdicated, and it is fitting that they withdraw from the capital. I pray Your Majesty will name the place of residence for the Liu family."

Taking the deposed Emperor by the arm, he led him forward and made him kneel below the altar to hear the command. Then the new Emperor conferred upon him the title of "Duke of Shanyang," ordering him to depart that very day for the place.

The wicked Hua Qin, his hand on his sword, pointed at his former lord and shouted in a harsh voice: "It is an old rule that the setting up of one Emperor means the deposition of another. Now, through the gracious kindness of His Majesty you are spared your life and created a duke. Leave at once and never return to court without being summoned."

The last Emperor of Han, in tears, bowed to the usurper for his clemency and left. The soldiers and people who witnessed the scene could not help feeling greatly sorry for him.

Cao Pi said to his courtiers, "Now I understand the story of Shun and Yu."

Then they all shouted, "Long live the Emperor!"

For two dynasties the Han reigned,
But the land was lost to them in a single day.
Little did he know, who then snatched their scepter,
That in time he would be replaced by another.*

The officials then asked Cao Pi to bow to Heaven and Earth to show his gratitude, but just as he was kneeling down a gust of furious wind suddenly swept up, and all at once there came a raging storm of whirling dust and flying stones, blowing out all the lights on the altar and darkening the entire sky. The newly-enthroned Emperor, terrified, collapsed to the ground. He was carried from the altar unconscious. After he came to, he was assisted into the palace, but for many days he was too ill to attend the court.

When he had somewhat recovered, he met his courtiers to receive their felicitations. He promoted all his officials, particularly Hua Qin and Wang Lang. But as his recovery was slow, he began to suspect that there were too many ghosts about the palace in the capital, so he departed for Luoyang, where he began erecting new palaces.

News soon reached Chengdu and Liu Bei, hearing the rumor that Emperor Xian had been put to death, was terribly upset. He wept bitterly all day and ordered all his officials to wear mourning attire. A sacrifice was instituted and the “late” Emperor was conferred the posthumous title of “Filial and Sorrowful Emperor.” This sad event brought on an illness, so that it was impossible for him to tend the business of his administration, which was then left in the hands of Zhuge Liang.

One day Zhuge Liang said to his colleagues, “The empire cannot be without its ruler for a single day—we must ask our prince to assume the title of Emperor.”

One of them, Jiao Zhou, agreed with him entirely. Citing auspicious signs that had been observed of late, he said, “There have been propitious indications of mild winds and gilded clouds. And a yellow vapor has been seen in the northwest rising to the very sky, and the Emperor’s star, appearing in this area, is as splendid in brilliance as the moon. These signs mean that our prince is to become Emperor to continue the rule of the House of Han. There can be no doubt.”

So Zhuge Liang and Xu Jing, at the head of a large group of officials, presented a memorial requesting the prince to assume the title of emperor.

Liu Bei was shocked when he read this and he cried, “Do you desire to reduce me to a disloyal and unfaithful person?”

“No,” said Zhuge Liang. “But Cao Pi has usurped the throne and as a scion of the House of Han, it is right and proper that you should succeed to the highest office.”

The prince suddenly showed anger. “But he is an arch rebel! How can I imitate him?”

Flicking his sleeves he rose and went inside. The officials dispersed. Three days later Zhuge Liang again led a deputation of officials and entreated the prince to come forth and hear them. He came, and they all knelt before him.

This time it was Xu Jing who spoke first. “The late emperor of the Hans has been slain by Cao Pi. You, my lord, will fail both in loyalty and rectitude if you do not assume the succession and raise an army to destroy the usurper. It is the wish of the whole empire that you be the supreme ruler so that you may avenge the death of the late emperor. You will dishearten the people if you do not accept what we propose.”

Liu Bei replied, “Although I am descended from an emperor of Han I have not been able to offer the people any benefits, and if I assumed the title of ‘Emperor,’ how would that be different from usurpation?”

Zhuge Liang pleaded with him again and again, but the prince remained obdurate. Then Zhuge Liang thought that where argument failed a ruse might succeed. So having arranged the parts his several colleagues were to play, he pleaded illness and remained at home.

When he heard that his chief advisor’s condition was becoming serious, Liu Bei went to his bedside to inquire after him.

“What illness are you suffering from, sir?” asked Liu Bei.

“My heart is burning with worries and I am going to die soon.”

“What are your worries?”

But Zhuge Liang did not reply. Although the question was repeated time and again he still refused to say anything, but lay with his eyes closed as if too ill to speak. It was only after

great exhortation from the prince that he spoke with a deep sigh, “My lord, from the day I left my humble cottage to enter your service, you have always listened to my words and accepted my advice. And now to my gratification you have possessed the western district, as I had predicted. But this usurpation by Cao Pi means the annihilation of the Hans and the cessation of their line, so my colleagues and I desired you to become emperor in order to crush Wei and restore Han, so that both you and your officials may achieve fame. But you refused so obstinately to accede to our wish. Now your officers and advisors are all disheartened and they will drift away before very long. After they are gone you will be left alone. If Wu and Wei come to attack, it will be difficult for you to hold on to what you have. Is this not sufficient reason for me to feel worried?”

“But I am afraid the whole land will blame me if I declare myself emperor,” replied the prince.

Zhuge Liang replied, “As the sage Confucius once said: ‘An adequate reason justifies an action.’ Now you are fully justified in accepting the highest honor—what is there to blame you for? Do you know the saying, ‘Those who discard what Heaven offers will be blamed’?”

“Well, it will not be too late when you have recovered from your illness,” said the prince.

At this, Zhuge Liang leapt from his bed and at his signal in rushed a group of high officials, who prostrated themselves before Liu Bei and said in unison: “So you have consented! Pray choose the day for the grand ceremony.”

Liu Bei was greatly startled to see them, and again blamed them for committing him to doing what was wrong.

Zhuge Liang said, “Since you have given your consent, we can proceed to build an altar and choose a propitious day for the great occasion.”

Without a moment’s delay two officials were appointed to see to the building of the altar. And when all was ready a great concourse of officials reverently escorted Liu Bei, riding in an imperial carriage, to the site. As he ascended the altar the great ceremony began.

Jiao Zhou, master of ceremony, solemnly read out the declaration in a loud voice:

On this twelfth day of the fourth month of the twenty-sixth year of the period Jian An, I, Liu Bei, the Emperor, make this solemn declaration to Heaven and Earth. The Hans have ruled the empire for hundreds of years. In the past Wang Mang usurped the throne, and later Emperor Guang Wu rose in his wrath and put him to death, thus restoring the Dynasty of Han. Of late Cao Cao, relying on his military strength, cruelly slew the Empress, and his crimes reached the skies. His son, Cao Pi, carrying evils into every quarter, has seized the scepter. My subordinates, regarding the dynasty as having been overthrown, think it fitting that I, Bei, should continue the line. As successor to the two great founders of the dynasty, Gao-zu (Liu Bang) and Guang Wu, I will punish the rebels as Heaven decrees. Fearing lest my virtue be inadequate to the throne, I consulted the voices of the people, and all, even the most distant, have said that the mandate of Heaven must not be disobeyed; the great empire of my

ancestors must not be long in the hands of another; and the land must never be without a lord. And they claim the cynosure of all eyes is myself. Now I, respecting the mandate of Heaven and fearing lest the great cause of Gao-zu and Guang Wu may perish, have reverently selected this auspicious day to ascend the altar to offer sacrifices and accept the imperial seal in order to comfort all the people. May Heaven bring eternal blessing to the House of Han!

When the reading ended, Zhuge Liang led the officials to present the imperial seal to Liu Bei, who took it in both hands. Then he laid it upon the altar and again declined, saying, "I am not qualified for such great honor. Pray choose another one who has both talent and virtue."

But Zhuge Liang said, "My lord, you have brought peace and order to the four seas and your merits are manifest to the whole country. Moreover, you are a member of the imperial family and it is only right that you succeed to the throne. Now that the great declaration has been made to Heaven and Earth, such self-denial is impossible."

At this all the officials shouted, "Eternal life to the Emperor!" and made their obeisance. So Liu Bei became Emperor of Shu Han and the dynastic title was announced to be Zhang-Wu.

Lady Wu was declared Empress and the eldest son, Chan, or A-dou, Heir-Apparent. The second son was made Prince of Lu and the third son, Prince of Liang. Zhuge Liang became prime minister, and Xu Jing, the next highest in rank. Many others were promoted, and a general amnesty was proclaimed, so that there was great rejoicing among the army and the people throughout the land of Shu.

The next day the first court was held, and when the military and civil officials, lined on two sides, had paid their obeisance, Liu Bei, the First Ruler of Shu Han, made a pronouncement.

“In the Peach Garden my two brothers and I pledged to live and die together. Unhappily my brother Yun-chang met his end at the hands of Sun Quan of Wu. I must avenge him or I will be breaking my oath. Therefore I intend to devote the whole force of my kingdom to the destruction of Wu and the capture of its rebellious chief.”

But just as he closed this speech an officer threw himself down at the foot of the throne and said, “No, this will not do.”

The First Ruler looked at the speaker and saw that it was Zhao Yun.

“Dire vengeance will I wreak!” so cried the King,
His minister replied, “Do no such thing.”

What arguments Zhao Yun would use will appear in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* In Chinese, the first line means “Wei,” which is a combination of the two characters “ghost” and “sent,” while the third line refers to the Chinese word for “Xu,” which is composed of the characters “word” and “noon”; the last line means “Zhang,” which consists of two words for “sun.”

Xuzhang, or Xudu, was then the capital of Han and later of Wei.

* An allusion to the Kingdom of Wei being soon replaced by that of Jin, with Sima Yi's son as ruler.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-ONE

Zhang Fei Is Assassinated

To Avenge His Younger Brothers Liu Bei Goes to War

Zhao Yun, who was opposed to the military campaign against Wu, said to the First Ruler: "The real renegade of the country is not Wu, but Wei; and now it is Cao Pi who has usurped the throne, which has aroused the anger of both gods and men. Your Majesty should try to seize the Guanzhong region first by camping your army on the upper reaches of the Wei River, from which to attack Wei. Then all those with a sense of justice will offer grain and horses to support you. If you leave Wei out of consideration in order to fight Wu, once the war begins, do you think you can disengage yourself quickly in case of necessity? It is worth considering."

The First Ruler replied, "Sun Quan is the one who slew my brother. Besides, Fu Shi-ren, Mi Fang, Pan Zhang, and Ma Zhong are my sworn enemies and I wish I could eat their flesh and wipe out their clans to appease my intense hatred. Why are you against that?"

"The enmity against Wei is a public matter whereas vengeance for your brother is personal. Matters of empire should be placed first."

“What do I care for an empire of a myriad of li as long as my brother is unavenged?”

So disregarding Zhao Yun’s remonstrance, he gave orders to prepare an army against Wu. To strengthen his military build-up he also sent an envoy to the Five Valleys to borrow an army of 50,000 tribesmen. At the same time he also sent a messenger to Langzhong conferring on Zhang Fei the rank of General of Cavalry and the titles of Marquis of Westland and Governor of Langzhong.

Now when Zhang Fei heard of Guan Yu’s death at the hands of Sun Quan he wept very bitterly day and night and his robe was stained with tears and blood. His subordinates tried to console him with wine, but the heavy drinking only increased his ill-humor, which he vented on any offender in his camp. Some of his men even died under the heavy floggings. Every day he would glare southward, grinding his teeth with rage and weeping loudly.

One day Liu Bei’s messenger was announced. Zhang Fei summoned him immediately. When he learned about the content of the edict he bowed toward the north to express gratitude for the imperial mandate. Then he gave a banquet in honor of the messenger.

At the banquet he said to his guest, “My brother died at the hands of Sun Quan and our enmity against him is as deep as the sea. Why don’t the officials at the court propose an avenging expedition?”

The messenger replied, “Most of them favor the destruction of Wei first and then Wu.”

“What nonsense?” cried Zhang Fei angrily. “When we three swore brotherhood in the Peach Garden we pledged to die together. Now, alas! My second brother has perished. How can I enjoy wealth and honor without him? I must see the Emperor and offer myself to lead the van. In mourning garb the army will smite Wu and capture the rebel Sun Quan so as to avenge my brother’s death and fulfill our oath.”

So he went with the messenger to Chengdu.

In the meantime the First Ruler had been busy training his army. Every day saw him in the drill ground and a date was chosen when he would lead the expedition in person to destroy Wu. Much worried about the adverse consequences of such an expedition, a number of courtiers went to see Zhuge Liang, to whom they said: “Our lord has but recently assumed the title of Emperor, yet he is taking personal command of this expedition, disregarding the damage this might cause to his throne. You, sir, hold the weighty post of chief advisor in such matters—why don’t you dissuade him?”

“I’ve tried repeatedly to dissuade him, but he just won’t listen. Now you all come with me to the drill ground, and we’ll try once more.”

So there they went, with Zhuge Liang at their head, and he said to the First Ruler: “Your Majesty has but lately taken the imperial seat. If this expedition were aimed at destroying Cao Pi, the renegade of Han, and preserving justice, it would be perfectly right for the Emperor to lead the army, but an officer of high rank would be more proper to send for an attack on Wu. Why should Your Majesty expose himself to such perils?”

The First Ruler, touched by the depth of his minister's concern and the wisdom of his counsel, began to waver a little in his determination. At that moment, however, the arrival of Zhang Fei was announced. He immediately summoned his brother, who came in, threw himself to the ground, and clasped his elder brother's feet, weeping bitterly. The First Ruler joined in the lamentation.

"Your Majesty is now ruler and too quickly forgets the oath in the Peach Garden! Why is our brother's death not avenged?"

The First Ruler replied, "Many advisors have remonstrated against this—I dare not act rashly."

"What do others know of our oath? If Your Majesty will not go, then let me sacrifice myself to avenge our brother. If I fail, I would rather die than return to see you."

"Then I will go with you," said the First Ruler. "You go and muster the men in your place and I will lead my veterans to meet you at Jiangzhou. Together we will smash Wu and have our revenge."

As Zhang Fei rose to take leave, his elder brother said to him: "I know you often lose your temper after drinking and flog your men. The beaten men who remain near you may be dangerous—it is certainly the road to misfortune. From now on you must be more kindly and not give way to your temper."

Zhang Fei accepted the admonition and left.

Soon after, the preparations for the expedition were complete and the army was about to set out. But again an official, Qin Mi by name, came to speak to his lord: “Your Majesty, it is not the practice of the ancients to risk your precious person for a small matter of rectitude. Pray reflect upon this.”

The First Ruler replied, “Yun-chang and I were as one body, and it is a very important matter of integrity. How can I forget that?”

But the official, still kneeling on the ground, continued, “I fear mishap may occur if Your Majesty disregards your servant’s words.”

The First Ruler replied in wrath, “How dare you use such ominous words before I start?”

He told the executioners to hustle him out and put him to death. Without showing any sign of fear, the official glanced back and said, smiling, “I have no regret in dying but it is a pity that this newly established state will be overturned before it is on its way.”

However, at the intervention of the other officials, the death penalty was remitted, but the speaker was committed to prison and his fate was to be decided after the return of the army of vengeance. When he heard of this Zhuge Liang hastened to send up a petition to rescue his colleague, which read:

I, Zhuge Liang, address Your Majesty in my own name and those of my comrades. We are fully aware that the loss of Jingzhou was the result of the wicked schemes of the

perfidious scoundrels of Wu. Thus the star of our great general was brought down and the mighty pillar of our state fell. This is a most grievous wrong and must never be forgotten. However, we cannot help remember that the subversion of the reign of Han lies with Wei and the removal of the Liu family is not the fault of Wu. We think that the destruction of Wei will determine the submission of Wu. Therefore we beg you to reconsider the valuable advice of Qin Mi so that the army will be fully rested for other exertions. That will bring the greatest happiness to the throne and the people.

But the petition was ignored. After reading it, the First Ruler cast it to the ground and said, "My mind is made up! No more remonstrance." Then he appointed Zhuge Liang regent and guardian of his son, to take charge of the administration of the kingdom, and ordered Ma Chao, Ma Dai, and Wei Yan to guard Hanzhong. For the expedition, Zhao Yun was to make up the reserve and to take care of the supplies while Huang Zhong was to lead the vanguard. The whole army, including the borrowed troops from the Five Valleys, numbered 750,000. A day in the seventh month was selected for the start of the expedition.

As soon as Zhang Fei had got back to his post he issued orders that his men should be ready to march in three days and the whole body was to be in mourning attire, with white flags and white armor. On the following day two officers named Fan Jiang and Zhang Da went to see their chief, saying that the time allowed to prepare the white flags and armor was insufficient and asked for more time.

“I am so anxious to avenge my brother that I wish I were on the land of my enemy now,” roared Zhang Fei. “Do you dare disobey my order?”

He called in the guards, had the two officers bound to trees and given fifty lashes each. At the close of the flogging he said, “By tomorrow you must get everything ready! If not, I will put you to death and expose your bodies!”

The two officers returned to their camp, spitting blood and hot with anger. Fan Jiang said, “We have been beaten today—what about tomorrow? This man’s temper is like fire, and if things are not ready we will both be killed.”

“Why don’t we slay him rather than be slain by him?” said Zhang Da.

“But how can we get near him?”

“If we are to have a chance to live, he will go to bed drunk; if we are to die, he will remain sober.” And they made their plan to slay their chief that night.

In his tent Zhang Fei was greatly disturbed in his mind and restless. He asked some of his subordinates, “I feel creepy and shivery today and cannot even rest. What can it mean?”

“This is due to too much brooding over the loss of your brother,” they explained.

Then Zhang Fei told them to bring wine, and he drank with his officers. Presently he became intoxicated and lay down on a couch in his tent.

Meanwhile, the two assassins had been watching his every movement very closely, and so they knew that he was lying on his couch, dead drunk. That night at the first watch they stole into his tent, each armed with a dagger. They sent away the attendants by saying that they had confidential matters to report and so got into his bedchamber.

But even then they dared not go near him, for Zhang Fei always slept with his eyes open, and he lay there as if still awake. However, the thunderous snores convinced them that he was really asleep, and they crept to the side of the couch. Then simultaneously they both stabbed him deep into the abdomen. Zhang Fei uttered one loud cry and lay still.

So Zhang Fei was murdered at the age of fifty-five.

He who whipped th' inspector years ago,
Who helped Han to sweep the rebels,
Whose prowess shone at Tigertrap Pass,
Whose roar frightened millions at Long Slope Bridge,
Who freed a captive and thus won a friend
That helped him and his brothers conquer Shu,
Whose wisdom to a district brought repose,
Is dead, the victim of assassins' blows,
'Ere he could have avenged his brother's death.
Langzhou will grieve him all the ages through.

Having slain their victim, the two murderers hacked off his head and made off for the country of Wu in haste, and when the bloody deed was known they had escaped too far to be captured.

The assassination was reported in a memorial by Wu Ban, who had once saved Guan Yu and was later sent by Liu Bei to serve under Zhang Fei. The eldest son, Zhang Bao, had his father's remains put in a coffin and, leaving the younger brother, Zhang Shao, to hold Lanzhong, went to see the First Ruler.

By that time, the army had already departed and the First Ruler had left the capital. Zhuge Liang and the other officials had escorted him out of the city for ten li and then returned to Chengdu. Still feeling ill at ease, Zhuge Liang remarked to his colleagues, "If Fa Zheng had been alive he would have been able to stop this expedition."

On the night Zhang Fei was murdered the First Ruler had an ominous presentiment. Some unnamable fear sent shivers through his body, as if some danger was imminent. As he could not sleep he went out of his tent and looked up at the stars. Suddenly he saw a bright meteor fall in the northwest, which filled his heart with apprehension. He at once sent someone to ask Zhuge Liang what it portended. The advisor sent back the reply that it meant the loss of a great general and there would be bad news in three days.

So the army halted. Then the arrival of a messenger from Langzhong was announced. The First Ruler stamped his foot and cried out in dismay, "Alas! My other brother is gone."

His foreboding was confirmed when he opened the letter. As he read the news of Zhang Fei's assassination he wailed loudly and fell in a swoon. He was rescued by the officials at his sides.

The next day a body of riders was seen galloping toward the army camp from a distance. The First Ruler went out to look and after a long while recognized Zhang Bao, son of Zhang Fei, dressed all in white. As soon as he got near he dismounted and knelt before his uncle, weeping. "My father has been murdered by Fan Jiang and Zhang Da. They have gone over to Wu, taking my father's head with them."

The loss of yet another brother grieved the First Ruler beyond measure and he again refused food. His officers begged him to consider his own health, saying, "Now Your Majesty has the loss of two brothers to avenge—you must not destroy yourself."

At their behest he finally agreed to take food. Then he asked Zhang Bao if he would lead his Langzhong force as vanguard of the army to avenge his father.

"For my country and for my father I would not shrink from a myriad of deaths," replied the young man.

Just as the vanguard led by Zhang Bao was leaving there approached another force led by another young officer in white robes and armor. It was Guan Xing, son of Guan Yu, who also threw himself to the ground before his uncle and wept.

At sight of him memories of Guan Yu welled up in the First Ruler's breast, and he burst into tears again. His officials did all they could to comfort him, but he was inconsolable.

"When I was but a commoner my two brothers and I pledged ourselves to live and die together," he said tearfully. "Now I

am Emperor and I should rejoice so much to share my good fortune with them, but both of them have met violent deaths. How it wrings my heart to see my two orphaned nephews!"

As he fell into another fit of bitter weeping the officials asked the two young men to withdraw temporarily so that the First Ruler could have some repose. When they were gone his close attendants entreated him not to give way to such extreme sorrow, since he was already over sixty.

"But my brothers are dead," wailed the First Ruler. "How can I bear to live alone?"

Beating his head on the ground he broke into a fresh paroxysm of weeping. His officials, deeply worried, took counsel with one another to try to find a way to comfort him.

Ma Liang said, "His Majesty is leading his army to attack Wu but he keeps weeping all day long. It is not an auspicious sign."

Then an official called Chen Zhen proposed a way out. "There lives a certain hermit among the Qingcheng Hills, near Chengdu," he said. "His name is Li Yi and people say he is a seer of more than three hundred years old. Let's ask His Majesty to send for this wise man and find out what is in store in the future. His words will have more weight than anything we can say."

They went to the First Ruler and told him about the seer. He agreed and Chen Zhen was commanded to go and summon the prophet. When he reached the hills Chen Zhen was guided by the local people to a secluded valley where he saw in the

distance a fairy cottage among the clouds. Presently a lad came out to receive the visitors.

“Are you not Chen Xiaoqi, sir?”

Startled that the lad knew him by his familiar name, Chen Zhen asked, “How do you know my name?”

“Yesterday my master told me that a messenger with an imperial command would come today and mentioned your name.”

“A real god!” cried Chen Zhen. “How very true people’s words are about him!”

So the two proceeded to the seer’s abode, and after paying his obeisance Chen Zhen declared his errand, but the prophet said he was too aged to travel.

“But the Emperor anxiously desires to see you. I hope you will not mind making the effort.”

In the end, after much persuasion, the prophet consented to go. The First Ruler received him affably, noting the contrast between his hoary head and fresh boyish complexion. The venerable seer had blue eyes with square sparkling pupils and he carried himself erect like a pine tree.

“This is no common man,” he thought to himself.

The seer said, “I am but an old man of the barren hills, without learning or wisdom. I do not deserve to be summoned

before you, Your Majesty. Pray tell me what I can do for you."

The First Ruler told him about the oath some thirty years before and the sad death of his two brothers. Then he added, "I am leading my army to avenge them and wish to know the expedition's outcome. Hearing that you, venerable sir, are learned in the deeper mysteries, I beg you to enlighten me."

"But this is fate, not something for an old man like me to know."

As the First Ruler pressed him for an answer the prophet at last asked for paper and a brush. Then he drew soldiers, horses, and weapons on some forty sheets of paper but, having done this, suddenly tore them all into fragments. Next, he drew a picture of a tall man lying on his back and another man at his side digging a grave to bury him. On top of the picture he wrote a single character: "white."

After this he bowed and departed without a word.

The First Ruler was annoyed. "Just a demented old fellow!" he said. "What he draws is not worth our notice." And he had the sheets of paper burned.

Then he gave orders for the army to advance. Zhang Bao, son of Zhang Fei, came in and said, "Wu Ban has come with my father's men—I pray that I may be appointed leader of the van."

The First Ruler admired his bravery and gave the van leader's seal to him. But just as he was going to attach the seal to his

girdle, another youth boldly stepped forth and said, “Leave that seal to me!”

It was Guan Xing, son of Guan Yu.

“I have already received my commission,” said Zhang Bao.

“What abilities do you have for such a task?” cried Guan Xing.

“I have been trained as a soldier since my boyhood. I can shoot so well that I never miss.”

“I should like to see your prowess,” said the First Ruler, “that I may decide who is the better.”

Zhang Bao ordered some soldiers to set up a flag at a hundred paces and draw a red heart in its center. Then he took his bow and shot three arrows, each of which went right through the red heart. All those present commended his fine performance of archery.

But Guan Xing, also bow in hand, said with a sneer, “What is it to hit such a mark?”

Just as he said this a flock of wild geese flew overhead. “I will hit the third one of the flying geese,” he said.

He shot and twang! the third goose fell.

“Wonderful!” all cried in one voice.

But Zhang Bao was enraged. Leaping on to his steed, he seized the long spear left him by his father, crying, “Do you dare to fight a real battle with me?”

Guan Xing took up the challenge at once. He sprang into the saddle, took his father’s great sword, and galloped out. “If you can swing a spear, do you think I cannot wield a sword?” he cried.

The two impetuous youths were on the point of a battle when their uncle told them to stop.

“Behave yourselves, you two!” he cried.

Both hastened to dismount, threw aside their weapons, and bowed to the ground to beg pardon.

“From the time I left my native place and swore brotherhood with your fathers, we three were like flesh and blood to one another. You two are also brothers and you should help each other in seeking vengeance for your fathers. How can you forget decency and quarrel between yourselves? If you behave like this when the death of your fathers is only recent, what will happen in future?”

Both fell at his feet and admitted their fault.

“Which of you two is the elder?” asked the First Ruler.

“I am the elder by a year,” said Zhang Bao.

The First Ruler then ordered Guan Xing to bow to Zhang Bao as an elder brother and, there in front of all, the two young

men broke an arrow as a pledge that each would always succor the other.

Then the First Ruler appointed Wu Ban leader of the van and the two young men his own aides. And the mighty forces advanced both on land and on water, in ships and on horses, toward the land of Wu, making a great show of their strength on the way.

In the meantime, the two assassins of Zhang Fei went to see Sun Quan and told him about Liu Bei's expedition against Wu. Sun Quan accepted their surrender.

Then he called in his officials and said anxiously, "Liu Bei has declared himself Emperor and is leading in person a very large force against us. What is to be done?"

Turning quite pale at this alarming news they could only stare at one another, unable to reply. Then Zhuge Jin stepped out and offered himself as a peace envoy.

"I have been in your service these many years and have never repaid the favor you have shown me. I will risk my life to go and see Liu Bei. I will prove to him the advantages of an alliance between our two sides against Cao Pi."

This offer pleased Sun Quan, who then appointed Zhuge Jin his envoy to try to persuade Liu Bei to call off the military campaign.

Messengers pass when states wrangle
May this one succeed and unravel this tangle!

The result of Zhuge Jin's peacemaking efforts will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-TWO

Sun Quan Receives Nine Gifts after Submitting to Wei

Liu Bei Rewards His Officers and Men in His War with Wu

In the eighth month of the year Zhang Wu (A.D. 221) the army of Shu had arrived at Gui Pass and the First Ruler camped at Baidi, or the City of the White Emperor. His advance guard had marched around the borders of Shu. While at Baidi, one day he was informed that Zhuge Jin had come as a messenger from Wu. He told them not to admit him.

But Huang Quan said, "His brother being your prime minister, he has certainly come on some important mission. Your Majesty ought to see him and hear what he has to say. If what he proposes is good, then agree; if not, you can ask him to return the message to Sun Quan and let him know that you are right to punish him."

The First Ruler took his advice and the messenger was brought in. He bowed down to the earth.

"Sir, you have come a long way," said the First Ruler. "What is your errand?"

"As my brother has long served Your Majesty, I am therefore feeling bold enough to come and relate to you what really

happened in Jingzhou. When Guan Yu was at Jingzhou my master repeatedly sought to ally the two families by marriage, but was refused. Later, when your brother attacked Xiangyang, Cao Cao wrote again urging my master to attack Jingzhou. But he was still unwilling to do so, and in the end it was Lu Meng, who hated your brother, that led the attack without the consent of my master, and seized the city. My master now deeply regrets this, but it was Lu Meng's fault, not my master's. Now that Lu Meng is dead, the enmity should die with him. Moreover, Lady Sun longs to come back to you. My master now proposes to send back his sister, hand over your officers who surrendered, and return Jingzhou to you. Our two sides will become permanent allies and we can join forces to destroy Cao Pi and punish him for his usurpation."

To this speech the First Ruler replied angrily: "You people killed my brother, yet you dare to come with your artful speech!"

Zhuge Jin said, "May I venture to point out to you the varying degrees of importance of the issues? Your Majesty is an uncle of the Emperor of Han. Now Cao Pi has seized the throne of the House of Han, yet instead of punishing the usurper, you condescend to avenge a sworn brother of another surname. Is this not ignoring the vital for the trivial? Furthermore, Wei occupies the central plains where the two Han capitals, Luoyang and Chang'an, are situated and it was in these two cities that the West and East Han Dynasties were founded. Your Majesty, however, gives no thought of capturing these places but insists on a dispute with Wu over Jingzhou. Is this not abandoning the significant for the insignificant? The whole country knows of your assumption of the title of

Emperor and all expect you to restore the Hans to their territory; but you put Wei aside and desire only to attack Wu. I fear you have made a bad decision."

All his arguments only added fuel to the fire and the First Ruler cried out in wrath: "The murderer of my brother will not live in the same world as I. Only death will stop me from avenging my brother. Were it not for the sake of my prime minister, I would behead you at once. As it is, you may go back and tell Sun Quan to cleanse his neck ready for the blade of the executioner."

Seeing that his argument was to no avail, Zhuge Jin took his leave.

But while he had been absent, slanders had occured. One day Zhang Zhao went to see Sun Quan and warned him of Zhuge Jin's possible desertion. "He knows the power of the Shu army so he made this mission an excuse to get into Shu. He will not return."

Sun Quan replied, "He and I have absolute trust of each other. I will not fail him just as he will not betray me. When he was at Caisang and his famous brother paid him a visit, I wanted him to persuade his brother to enter my service. His reply was that his brother would not desert his master any more than he himself would—each would be faithful to his lord. His loyalty was clear enough. How can he desert me now? Our friendship has something of the divine in it, and no outsider can sow dissension between us."

Even as he spoke it was announced that Zhuge Jin had returned.

“You see,” said Sun Quan.

Zhang Zhao, overwhelmed with shame, withdrew. Presently Zhuge Jin came in and reported the failed mission.

“Then we are in great danger,” cried Sun Quan in dismay.

At this point an official named Zhao Zi suggested asking Cao Pi to attack Hanzhong, which would force their enemy to return home and the danger to Wu would be lifted. He also volunteered to be the emissary to Wei.

Sun Quan, who liked his plan very much, said to Zhao Zi, “This is a very good plan, but if you go you must not lose the dignity of our country.”

“If I should bring any shame to our country I will simply drown myself in the river—I could never stand before our people again.”

Satisfied with his answer, Sun Quan prepared a memorial, styling himself “minister” to the Emperor of Wei and appointed Zhao Zi his messenger. Taking the document Zhao Zi soon reached the capital, where he first sought out Jia Xu and some other officials.

At court on the following day Jia Xu stood forth and said, “Wu has sent a high official, Zhao Zi, with a memorial.”

“That is because they want the Shu army driven off,” said Cao Pi, smiling. He summoned the messenger, who knelt down in the outer court to pay his obeisance and handed in

the memorial. After reading it, Cao Pi asked, “What sort of a master is the Marquis of Wu?”

“Intelligent, clear-sighted, kindly, brave, and perspicacious,” was the reply.

Cao Pi laughed. “Are you not exaggerating?”

“No, I am not,” replied Zhao Zi. “My master deserves the highest praise. He employed Lu Su at the time of crisis, which shows he is intelligent. He promoted Lu Meng to be commander of the army, which showed his clear-sightedness. He captured Yu Jin but did not hurt him, which shows his kindliness. He seized Jingzhou without causing any bloodshed, which shows his wisdom. He maintains the three rivers to challenge the world, which shows his boldness. Lastly, he bows before Your Majesty, which shows his perspicacity. Do you agree that I am not overstating in the least?”

“What about learning? Is he much of a scholar?”

“Sire, remember he commands a large fleet and a huge army. He employs men of wisdom and talents in his service, and his mind is full of great plans and projects. When he has a little leisure he reads the histories and the annals, but his aim is to grasp their main issues rather than identifying remarkable passages and selecting model sentences, like a pedantic scholar.”

“I want to overcome Wu—do you think it feasible?”

"If a large state has the military force to attack, a small one knows also how to defend itself."

"Is Wu afraid of Wei?"

"What is there to be afraid of, with our million-man army and the great Yangtze as our moat?"

"How many such persons as yourself does Wu possess?"

"Intelligent and specially qualified ministers number about a hundred. As to people like myself—there are cartloads of them, too many to count."

Cao Pi sighed, saying, "You are certainly one of those envoys who do credit to their lords' missions wherever they are sent."

Then he issued the mandate, conferring on Sun Quan the title of Prince of Wu and rewarding him with the Nine Gifts. An envoy was chosen to bear this edict to Sun Quan. This pleased the messenger from Wu, who thanked Cao Pi and took his leave.

After his departure, however, Liu Ye voiced an objection. "Sun Quan has come to us out of fear for the army of Shu. In my humble opinion, his war with Shu is a Heaven-sent chance to wipe him out. If you send an able general with an army across the river to attack him from within while he is being attacked by Shu from without, Wu as a state will disappear in less than ten days. If Wu goes, Shu will be isolated and can easily be dealt with at your leisure."

“But I cannot attack him now that he has submitted to me. It will discourage others from doing so. It is better to accept his surrender.”

Liu Ye continued: “Although talented, he is but a general of an inferior rank and a marquis of the decaying days of Han. As his rank is low his influence is but small, and he still fears the central government. If you promote him to the status of a prince he is only one rank below yourself. While knowing the insincerity of his submission, you give him an exalted position and so increase his influence. This is no less than giving wings to a tiger.”

Cao Pi said, “No, I will help neither Wu nor Shu. I will wait and see how they deal with each other. When one of the two perishes only one will remain. I will destroy the remaining one without difficulty. Say no more now, sir, for I have decided.”

The envoy, named Xing Zhen, soon accompanied Zhao Zi to Wu.

When news of the arrival of Cao Pi’s envoy reached him, Sun Quan was discussing with his officials how to drive off the invaders. By the rules of courtesy the messenger bearing the edict should be met at a great distance from the capital, but Gu Yong was opposed to accepting the rank.

“My lord, you should style yourself ‘Superior General’ and ‘Earl of Nine Regions’; you should not accept any rank from Wei.”

“What is wrong with that? Even the founder of Han on one occasion accepted a princely rank from his adversary Xiang Yu.”

So he went out at the head of a large gathering of officials to welcome the messenger. The bearer of the mandate from Wei conducted himself haughtily as the representative of a superior country and an imperial ambassador. When he entered the city he did not even descend from his carriage. His arrogance infuriated Zhang Zhao, who started to rebuke him.

“Everyone must obey the rules of courtesy as everyone must respect the laws. Yet you behave so disrespectfully. Do you think there is no such thing as a sword in the country?”

Hurriedly the messenger got down from his chariot to meet Sun Quan. And they went into the city side by side.

As the cavalcade proceeded, a loud voice was heard in the rear of the two carriages, crying, “We cannot risk our lives to help our lord smash Wei and swallow Shu but let him receive a title from another. What a shame it is to us!”

The man was Xu Sheng. And the messenger said with a sigh, “With such generals and ministers Wu will not long be content to obey the command of another.”

However, the title was accepted. Sun Quan then gave orders to collect beautiful jade and precious pearls to be sent to Cao Pi as return gifts.

Not long after came tidings of the invading forces—Liu Bei was leading his own army and he was also assisted by the barbarian king Shamoke, with several hundred thousand of his men, and by two Han generals, Du Lu and Liu Ning, with their two cohorts. The mighty armies were advancing by land and water, exhibiting such enormous strength that seemed to shake the very heavens. The naval force had already sailed out of the Wu Gorge and the land force had reached Zigui.

Although Sun Quan had been created a prince, yet the Emperor of Wei would not offer any military aid. At the terrible news he asked for advice from his advisors and officers, but there was no response. All of them were silent.

"Alas!" he sighed. "When Zhou Yu was gone I had Lu Su, and when he died Lu Meng succeeded him. But now he, too, is gone and there is no one to share my troubles!"

But he had hardly finished speaking when a young officer stepped out and bowed before him, saying, "Though I am young I am well versed in the books of war, and with several legions I will go and destroy the men of Shu."

The young man was Sun Huan, whose father was Yu He. Sun Ce, brother of Sun Quan, loved the youth and gave him his own family name of Sun, and so made him a member of the clan. He was the eldest of Yu He's four sons. He was an expert archer and horseman and had accompanied his protector in various campaigns, during which he had distinguished himself as a brave officer. At this time he was twenty-five years old.

"How do you think you can overcome them?"

“There are two able officers under my command, Li Yi and Xie Jing, both who are equal to the strength of 10,000 men. With several legions I will capture Liu Bei.”

“Though you are very brave you are too young. You must have an assistant.”

At this another general, Zhu Ran by name, stepped forward and offered himself. Giving his consent, Sun Quan appointed the two volunteers joint commanders of 50,000 soldiers and marines. They were to start out as soon as possible.

Scouts soon reported that the army of Shu was camped at Yidu, so Sun Huan led half his men to its border and set up three camps there.

Now Wu Ban, as van leader of the army, had met with uninterrupted success since he left the country of Shu. His opponents surrendered at the mere news of his approach and his men were able to advance as far as Yidu with unstained swords. There, however, he learned that Sun Huan had encamped to oppose his progress. He at once sent a message to the First Ruler, who was then at Zigui.

The First Ruler was angry when he learned this. “How dare this youth try to withstand me?”

“Since Sun Quan has made this youth commander of his army, it is unnecessary to send a general of high rank,” said Guan Xing. “Let me go and capture him.”

“I would like to see how brave you are,” said the First Ruler, and he gave him orders to go.

Just as he was leaving, Zhang Bao stepped forth and asked for permission to go with him.

"It is even better if you both go," said the First Ruler. "But you must be prudent and not hasty."

So they took leave and soon advanced together with the van leader. Sun Huan, hearing of the coming of a large army, marched out all his men and deployed for battle. His two officers were placed on his two sides by the great standard. They watched the men of Shu filing out and noted two leaders in silver helmets and silver mail, riding on white horses. The flags were white, too. First came Zhang Bao with a long spear, and then Guan Xing carrying a great sword.

"Sun Huan, you idiot! Your time has come," cried Zhang Bao abusively. "How dare you stand against the forces of the Emperor?"

"Your father is a headless ghost," cried Sun Huan, no less abusive, "and you hurry along to join him. What a fool you are!"

Zhang Bao angrily rode at Sun Huan. From behind his chief, Xie Jing dashed out to meet him. After some two score bouts, Xie Jing ran away in defeat and Zhang Bao followed in pursuit.

When his comrade Li Yi saw him worsted he whipped up his steed and came to his rescue, whirling his gilded battle-ax. Zhang Bao fought a score of bouts with him but before the result of the battle could be decided a minor officer in the Wu army, noting that his colleague could not overcome Zhang

Bao, shot a treacherous arrow that wounded Zhang Bao's steed. Feeling the pang of the wound, the horse bolted back to his own side, but fell before he reached it, throwing his rider sprawling to the ground. Seeing this, Li Yi hastened forward to slay Zhang Bao with his battle-ax. But just as he raised the weapon to deliver the lethal blow, lo!—a red flash came between them, and his own head rolled down to the ground.

It was Guan Xing who had killed him. When he saw Zhang Bao's horse falling and Li Yi hurrying up, he had rushed in and dealt that fatal blow, thus saving Zhang Bao's life. They followed this victory by attacking even more vigorously and the battle ended with Sun Huan's defeat.

The next day Sun Huan came out to offer battle again, and the two cousins went forth together. Guan Xing challenged Sun Huan to battle. Sun Huan rode out fiercely to engage him but after some thirty bouts he was too exhausted to fight on and had to turn back to his own side. The two cousins chased him to his camp. Wu Ban, with two other officers, led the men to join in the fight. Zhang Bao was the first to force his way into the ranks of Wu. He came across Xie Jing, whom he slew with a single spear thrust. The men of Wu scattered and fled, and the victory was on the side of Shu.

But Guan Xing was missing. Zhang Bao was greatly worried, saying he would not live if something happened to his cousin. So he gathered up his long spear and rode out to look for him. Presently he met Guan Xing, who bore his sword in his left hand and held a captive in his right.

"Who's this?" asked Zhang Bao.

“In the melee I met an enemy,” cried Guan Xing, “and I took him prisoner.”

Zhang Bao recognized the man to be the one who had shot the treacherous arrow that had brought down his horse. The two returned to camp, where they slew their prisoner and poured a libation of his blood as sacrifice to the dead horse. After this they drew up a report to inform the First Ruler of the victory.

Sun Huan had lost his two major warriors as well as many other officers and men. His army was too weakened to continue the campaign, so he also sent back a report asking for reinforcements.

In the Shu camp two officers said to Wu Ban, “The army of Wu is broken. Let’s raid their camp tonight.”

But Wu Ban said, “Though Sun Huan has lost much of his land force, Zhu Ran’s marine force is positioned on the river, untouched. If the marines land in force and cut off our retreat we will be in danger.”

“That is easy to deal with,” said Zhang Nan. “Tell the two young officers to take 5,000 men each and set an ambush in the valleys. If Zhu Ran comes, they can smite him from two sides.”

Wu Ban thought of an even better plan. “I think it better to send some soldiers to pretend to be deserters. Let them tell Zhu Ran of our plan to raid Sun Huan’s camp, and Zhu Ran will come to the rescue as soon as he sees the camp on fire. Then the ambushing men can attack him and victory is certain.”

They thought this a very good plan and they made the necessary arrangements to carry it out.

Hearing of the defeat of his colleague, Zhu Ran was already thinking of going to his help. Just then his men brought a few enemy deserters to his ship. He questioned them and they said they were Feng Xi's men, who had deserted because of unfair treatment. "We have a secret to tell you," they added.

"What secret is it?"

"Tonight Feng Xi is going to make an attack upon General Sun's camp. They are going to raise a fire as a signal."

Zhu Ran at once sent someone to warn Sun Huan of this. But the messenger never arrived, as Guan Xing intercepted and slew him. Unaware of what had happened to his messenger, Zhu Ran discussed with his men about going to help his colleague.

"You cannot fully trust the words of those soldiers," said Cui Yu. "Both army and navy will be lost if anything goes awry. I think you had better hold the position here and let me go instead."

Zhu Ran saw this was the wiser plan, so he gave Cui Yu nearly half his force and sent him away. That night an attack was made on Sun Huan's camp. Fire broke out everywhere in the camp and the men of Wu scattered and fled in utter confusion.

Seeing the flames, Cui Yu pressed on. But just as he was passing some hills he came upon the ambush, and the two

cousins appeared, one on either side. Taken by surprise, Cui Yu could only try to flee, but he met Zhang Bao, who captured him following a single bout. When Zhu Ran heard of it he was panic-stricken and retreated some sixty li downstream.

The remnants of Sun Huan's men ran away. As they went he asked what places suitable for encampment lay on their road. They told him that the city of Yiling in the north had strong walls and ample supplies. So they went toward the city. Just as they entered Yiling, their pursuers came up and the city was besieged.

Guan Xing and Zhang Bao went back to Zigui to see the First Ruler, who rejoiced at their success. The prisoner was put to death and the soldiers were rewarded. News of these victories spread far and wide and the officers of Wu had no inclination to fight.

When the Prince of Wu received Sun Huan's appeal for help he was so frightened that he did not know what to do. So he called a great council at which he said, "Sun Huan is besieged in Yiling and Zhu Ran has been defeated on the river—what can be done?"

Zhang Zhao said, "Though several of your officers are dead, yet you have a dozen more left. There is no need to worry about Liu Bei. You can make Han Dang commander and Zhou Tai as his second. Place Pan Zhang in the van, Ling Tong in the rear, and Gan Ning in reserve. Give them 100,000 men to withstand the enemy."

Sun Quan made the appointments as proposed. Gan Ning was ill with diarrhea just then, but he accepted the task.

Now the First Ruler had made a line of forty camps from Jianping near the Wu Gorge to Yiling, at a distance of seven hundred li apart. He was exceedingly pleased with his two nephews, who had distinguished themselves repeatedly in battles.

"All my former generals are old and useless," he said. "But now I have two such brave nephews. What have I to worry about Sun Quan?"

Then he was told of the coming of Sun Quan's army under newly appointed leaders, and before he could select an officer to oppose his enemy his men came to report that Huang Zhong had run off to Wu with half a dozen men.

"He is no traitor," he said, smiling. "I made a slip of the tongue when I spoke of old and useless generals. He will not admit he is old and wants to demonstrate he is not."

Then he called his two nephews and said to them, "Huang Zhong may fail in this rash action of his, so I want you two to go to his assistance. Do not mind the fatigue. As soon as he has achieved some sort of success make him return and do not let him come to grief."

So the two got their men together and went off to assist the aged warrior.

When young, success is easy, thine at will,
Aged warriors may fail, though willing still.

What happened to Huang Zhong will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-THREE

Liu Bei Gets His Sworn Enemies at Xiaoting

Lu Xun Is Made Commander to Guard the Yangtze

As has been said, the veteran warrior Huang Zhong was among the officers who followed the First Ruler to war against Wu. When he heard his master spoke disparagingly of old generals, he took his sword and made his way to the army camp at Yiling with a few faithful followers. He was welcomed by the officers there, but they wondered why he had come.

"Why have you come, general?" they asked.

"I have followed our lord the Emperor ever since he seized Changsha, and I have always exerted myself. I am now over seventy, but I have a good appetite, can stretch the strongest bow, and ride the fastest horse without fatigue. I am not an enfeebled old man. But our master says old generals are useless, so I have come to take part in the fight against Wu. I will show him that I am not too old to slay enemy officers."

Just about that time the leading division of the Wu army drew near, and their scouts were close to the camp. Huang Zhong rose at once to go out into the battle.

“Wait, general, do not be too hasty,” warned the officers.

But Huang Zhong paid no attention and set off at full speed. Worried for his safety, the van leader sent Feng Xi to help him. As soon as he saw the array of the enemy, the old general pulled up and challenged the enemy van leader, Pan Zhang, to battle but the latter sent out one of his subordinates instead. Seeing how old his antagonist was the man rode casually forth with his spear set, but in the third bout Huang Zhong cut him down. This angered Pan Zhang, who flourished the Blue Dragon, the mighty sword of Guan Yu, and took up the battle. These two fought several bouts, but Pan Zhang, who soon realized that he could not overcome the old warrior, galloped off. Huang Zhong pursued and smote him, scoring a full victory.

On his way back he fell in with the two young officers, Guan Xing and Zhang Bao, who told him they had come by their uncle’s command to aid him if necessary.

“And now that you have scored so complete a victory we beg you to return to the main camp.”

But the veteran would not listen. The next day Pan Zhang came to challenge again, and Huang Zhong at once accepted. He would not allow the two young men to go with him, nor would he accept assistance from the others. With 5,000 men he set out. Before many bouts had been exchanged Pan Zhang made a feint and escaped.

Huang Zhong pursued, shouting at him. “Do not attempt to flee, for now I will avenge the death of Guan Yu,” he cried.

Huang Zhong pursued some thirty li, when all of a sudden loud shouts rose on all sides and he found himself attacked on both flanks and in the rear; his erstwhile fleeing enemy also turned, so that he was completely surrounded. At that moment a great storm came on and the wind blew furiously. Huang Zhong hastened to retreat. But as he did so, Ma Zhong led another enemy troop down a slope and shot an arrow that wounded the veteran in the shoulder, nearly throwing him down from his horse. Seeing him wounded the men of Wu all came on to attack, but at that critical moment the two young officers rushed up, drove off the enemy, and rescued Huang Zhong.

He was taken back to the main camp. But he was too old to survive the serious wound which gaped wide, causing him great pain. On his deathbed the First Ruler visited him and, patting him on the back, said regretfully, “It is my fault that you have been hurt in the battle.”

“I am but a soldier,” said the old general. “I am glad that I could serve Your Majesty. Now I am seventy-five and I have lived long enough. Pray take good care of your health and strive to conquer the whole country.”

These were his last words. Then he lost consciousness and died that night.

A poem was written to honor him:

First among veterans stands Huang Zhong,
Who won great merit in the conquest of Shu.
Old, he still donned his coat of mail,
And laid his hand to the curving bow.

His valor was the talk of all the north,
His fame spread across the newly-won west.
Tardy he bowed his snow-white head to death,
Fighting to the end—in very truth a hero.

The First Ruler was very sad when he heard of Huang Zhong's death and had him buried in Chengdu.

"Three of my Five Tiger Generals are gone," he sighed, "yet I have been unable to avenge their deaths. How very grievous it is!"

Then he led the Imperial Guard to Xiaoting, where he called a great assembly. He divided his forces into eight units to launch an all-out attack on his enemy by land and water. The marines were placed under the command of Huang Quan, while he himself led the land force. It was then the second month of the second year of Zhang Wu (A.D. 222).

When Han Dang and Zhou Tai heard of the approach of the army of Shu, they led their own forces to confront it. When near, the two armies were arrayed against each other. The two leaders of Wu rode out and saw the First Ruler seated on horseback beneath the great standard amid every kind of imperial insignia, surrounded by his military staff.

Han Dang spoke loudly: "Your Majesty is now Ruler of Shu. Why do you risk your life on the battlefield? Should anything go amiss it would be too late to regret."

The First Ruler pointed at the speaker and abused him vehemently: "You dogs of Wu killed my brother. I swear that you and I will never live under the same sky!"

“Who dares to plunge into the enemy line?” asked Han Dang, turning to those in his train.

An officer rode to the front with his spear set and as he did so Zhang Bao with a roar galloped out to meet him. Frightened by his thunderous voice the officer sought to flee. Then Zhou Tai’s brother, Zhou Ping, seeing that his colleague was panic-stricken, flourished his sword and rode out to his aid. At once Guan Xing dashed to the front to engage him. With another roar, Zhang Bao thrust his opponent down from his steed. His colleague’s death scared Zhou Ping and enfeebled his defense, so that Guan Xing speedily slew him. Then the two cousins plunged forward to attack the two enemy leaders, who hurriedly sought refuge in the rear of their force.

“The tiger fathers have no curs of sons,” said the First Ruler with a sigh of satisfaction.

Then he waved his whip as a signal to press on, and the Wu army suffered a great defeat. The force of the eight divisions was irresistible as a river in flood, and the slaughter was immense.

At that time Gan Ning was nursing his illness onboard a ship, but he dashed into his saddle when he heard the army of Shu had come. Soon he met a cohort of the barbarian soldiers. These men wore their hair loose and went barefoot. Their weapons were crossbows, long spears, swords, or axes. And they had shields to ward off blows. They were led by their own ruler, King Shamoke. His face was spotted with red as if splashed with blood, and his eyes were blue and protruding. He wielded a spiked iron staff and had two bows slung at his belt, looking the very image of terror. Gan Ning, knowing

that he had no chance of victory against such a man, dared not engage him but turned his steed to flee. But as he fled, Shamoke shot an arrow that hit Gan Ning's head. Seriously wounded as he was, he rode on to Fuchikou, where he dismounted and sat under a tree. There he died. Hundreds of crows flew down from the tree and gathered round the corpse.

The Prince of Wu was genuinely grieved at the news of his death. He had the remains buried honorably and erected a shrine to his memory.

Gan Ning was first of warriors in Wu
With silken sails he stemmed the Yangtze's tide,
Right loyally he served his prince, and true,
For friendship's sake he saved his foe.
Light horse led he by night a camp to raid,
And first he warmed his men with generous wine.
His resting place the solemn birds betrayed,
And fragrant incense smolders at his shrine.

This victory gave the First Ruler possession of Xiaoting. But when the battle ended all returned except Guan Xing. Search parties were sent to look for him throughout the countryside.

Now when Guan Xing dashed in among the men of Wu he had caught sight of Pan Zhang, his arch enemy, and galloped after him in hot pursuit. In terror, Pan Zhang took to the hills and disappeared in the valleys. Thinking that his foe could only be in the hills, Guan Xing looked high and low, but Pan Zhang was nowhere to be found. Then darkness fell and he lost his way. Fortunately it was a clear, starry night. At about midnight he came to a farm, where he dismounted and

knocked at the door. A venerable old man appeared and asked him who he was.

“I am an officer in the war, and I have lost my way,” said Guan Xing. “I wonder if you could give me something to eat.”

The old man led him into a hall lit by candles, and there he saw a picture of his father. At once he fell to his knees before it and wailed.

“Why do you cry?” asked the old man.

“This is my father,” said Guan Xing.

At this, the old man bowed to his guest.

“Why should you treat my father with such respect?” asked the young man.

“This place is protected by your father’s honored spirit. Even when he lived the people here served him, and even more so now he is a saint. I have been counting on the army of Shu to avenge his death, and it is indeed a good fortune for the people that you have come.”

Then he brought forth wine and food to serve his guest. He also unsaddled his horse and fed it.

Some two hours later a knocking came at the door, and when the old man opened it, the visitor turned out to be none other than Pan Zhang. He had also come to ask for shelter.

As he came in Guan Xing recognized him. Drawing his sword, he cried, “Stay, you ruffian!”

Pan Zhang immediately turned to flee, but on the threshold there suddenly appeared a figure of ruddy complexion with phoenix eyes, bushy eyebrows, and a long, flowing beard, who was clad in a green robe and golden armor, and armed with a weighty sword.

Recognizing Guan Yu in his spirit form, Pan Zhang shrieked in terror, and his very soul seemed to have been squeezed out of him. He tried to escape but before he could even turn round, Guan Xing raised his sword and as it fell, Pan Zhang lay dead. Taking the bloody heart of his dead enemy, Guan Xing presented it as a sacrifice before the picture of his father. After that he took possession of his father’s sword, the Blue Dragon, curved as the crescent moon. Having hacked off the head of his fallen enemy he fastened it to his bridle. Then he took leave of his host, saddled his enemy’s horse, and rode away toward his own camp. The old man dragged the corpse of the dead soldier outside and burned it.

Guan Xing had not gone very far when he heard the neighing of horses and soon met a troop led by Ma Zhong, one of Pan Zhang’s men, who fell into a great rage when he saw the head of his chief swinging under the neck of Guan Xing’s horse and the famous sword in his hand. He galloped up furiously and Guan Xing, who recognized him as another enemy of his late father, rushed forward and raised the Blue Dragon to strike him. Just then, however, Ma Zhong’s three hundred soldiers all came up to support their chief, and Guan Xing was surrounded. Fighting all alone against hundreds of enemies, Guan Xing was soon in dire danger, but at that

moment a rescue force arrived from the northwest led by his cousin Zhang Bao. At this Ma Zhong drew off his men and rode away.

The two cousins pursued him. But before they had gone far they met another force under Mi Fang and Fu Shi-ren, who had come out to seek Ma Zhong. The two bodies of soldiers clashed, but as they had few men the two cousins hastily drew off. Then they made their way to Xiaoting, where they told their adventure to their uncle and presented the head of their enemy. The First Ruler was amazed but pleased that one of his sworn enemies had been slain.

Ma Zhong went back and rejoined his commanders. The defeated men, many of them wounded, were recalled to their camps to set up defenses. Ma Zhong, together with Mi Fang and Fu Shi-ren, encamped by the riverside.

That night many of their soldiers were groaning with the pain of their wounds. Mi Fang, who was listening, heard one of them say: “We used to be Jingzhou men and our general fell victim to Lu Meng’s vile machinations. Now the Emperor of Shu has arrived in person to destroy Wu, and sooner or later Wu will be wiped out. But he has a special grudge against Mi Fang and Fu Shi-ren. Why don’t we kill these two traitors and go over to Shu? We will have done a great service.” Then he heard another say: “Don’t be too hasty. Wait till there is a good opportunity.”

Mi Fang did not like this at all. He told Fu Shi-ren that the men were mutinous and their lives were in danger.

“The Emperor of Shu hates Ma Zhong most intensely,” he said to his comrade. “Suppose we kill him and surrender. We can say we were compelled to give in to Wu, but as soon as we learned of his coming we wanted to return to him and admit our fault.”

“No, it won’t do,” objected Fu Shi-ren. “If we go he will kill us.”

“No, I don’t think so,” insisted Mi Fang. “He is merciful and kind. And his heir, A-dou, is my nephew. He will surely not harm a relative.”

In the end they decided to go. At midnight they furtively crept into Ma Zhong’s tent and stabbed him to death. Then they cut off his head, and with their grisly trophy and dozens of followers they set off for the camp of the First Ruler. They arrived at the outpost and were taken to see the officers there, to whom they told their tale. The next day they were led into the main camp and brought before Liu Bei. They presented the trophy, knelt on the ground and wept, saying, “We are not traitors but victims of Lu Meng’s wickedness. He lied that General Guan was dead and tricked us into opening the city gate. We were then compelled to surrender. But when we heard Your Majesty had come we slew this man to avenge the general. We implore your forgiveness, Your Majesty.”

The First Ruler said, “I left Chengdu a long time ago—why did you not come to confess your crime earlier? Now you find yourselves in danger and you come with this specious tale to try to save your lives. If I pardon you, how can I look my brother in the face when we meet beneath the Nine Springs?”

Then he ordered Guan Xing to set up an altar to his father in the camp, and he himself offered Ma Zhong's head before the tablet of Guan Yu. After that he had the two deserters stripped and made them kneel before the altar, and with his own hand he hewed them to pieces as sacrifices.

Suddenly Zhang Bao came in and wailed before him. "The two enemies of my uncle have been slain, but when will I avenge my father's death?"

"Don't grieve, my nephew," said the First Ruler, "I'm going to lay waste the land of Wu and slay all the curs that live there. I will assuredly capture the two murderers of your father and let you offer them as sacrifices to his spirit."

Zhang Bao thanked him and went away, still weeping.

By this time the powerful name of the First Ruler was felt very deeply among the men of Wu, who stood in mortal dread of him and wailed night and day. Their two commanders, Han Dang and Zhou Tai, were much upset by this unusual behavior of their soldiers, so they sent a dispatch to their master to tell him of what had happened to Ma Zhong and the other two.

Much distressed at the news, Sun Quan called together his counselors for advice. At this meeting Bu Ji said, "Among those whom Liu Bei hated most, five are already dead. The only remaining ones are the two murderers of Zhang Fei. Why not hand over the two assassins and Zhang Fei's head? Then promise to give up Jingzhou and send back Lady Sun so as to have peace with Liu Bei, and propose to continue our

former alliance against Wei. That will make the men of Shu withdraw."

This proposal seemed good to Sun Quan. So the head of Zhang Fei was enclosed in a sandalwood box and the two assassins, Fan Jiang and Zhang Da, were bound and put in a cage-cart. All these were sent with a letter proposing peace through the envoy, Cheng Bing, to the First Ruler in Xiaoting.

The First Ruler was about to march farther east when he was told that a messenger had come from Wu with the head of his brother and the two assassins. The First Ruler raised both his hands to his forehead* and cried in joy, "This is indeed a gift from Heaven! It is also an indication of the power of my brother's spirit!"

He told Zhang Bao to prepare an altar. When he opened the box and saw that his brother's face looked so much alive, without an altered complexion, he broke into loud wailing. Then the son hacked the two men to pieces and offered them on the altar.

However, this friendly gesture from Sun Quan did not appease his anger and he still desired to destroy Wu.

"Your enemies are now all dead and you have your vengeance," remonstrated Ma Liang. "Minister Cheng is here to propose peace, promising to return Jingzhou and Lady Sun to you and offering perpetual alliance with you. He is waiting for your reply."

But the First Ruler replied savagely, "The one I would grind to pieces is Sun Quan. To enter into an alliance with him

would be treachery to my two brothers and a breach of our oath. Now I will exterminate Wu first, and Wei will follow."

He wished also to put the messenger to death, but relented after earnest pleadings from his officials. The messenger ran off terrified, and returned to tell Sun Quan how implacable his enemy was.

Sun Quan was panic-stricken, not knowing what to do. Seeing this, Kan Ze stepped forth and said, "My lord, you possess a mighty pillar, why not use him?"

"Who do you mean?" asked Sun Quan.

"In the past you entrusted Zhou Yu with important matters of the country, and he was followed by Lu Su. After him it was Lu Meng who made decisions on major issues. Though he is dead now there is still Lu Xun in Jingzhou. He is reputed to be a scholar but he is actually a bold and capable strategist, not inferior to Zhou Yu, in my opinion. It was his plan that captured Guan Yu. If anyone can destroy Liu Bei, he is the man. If he fails, I will share his punishment."

"I nearly made a serious mistake if you hadn't reminded me," said Sun Quan gratefully.

"Lu Xun is only a scholar. He is no match for Liu Bei," objected Zhang Zhao. "I fear he is not suitable for the post."

Gu Yong also disagreed, saying, "He is too young and too inexperienced. He will not be able to command his officers and that will lead to disasters."

Bu Ji, too, voiced his opposition. “He is clever enough to control a district, but not fit for the command of the entire force.”

Exasperated, Kan Ze shouted, “He is our only hope! I guarantee that he will succeed on the lives of all my family.”

“I know he is unique,” said Sun Quan. “I have now made up my mind he is the man. No more arguing, gentlemen.”

So Lu Xun was summoned. Now Lu Xun, also called Lu Bo-yan, was a native of Wu, son of Lu Jun, who was an officer in Jiujiang. He was a fine-looking man of medium height, with a clear complexion like fine jade.

After arriving he went to pay his respects to Sun Quan, who said to him, “I want to place you in supreme command of all the forces to withstand Liu Bei.”

“My lord, you have numerous experienced officers and advisors in your service. I am young and untalented. How can I hope to command them?” replied Lu Xun.

“Kan Ze vouches for your ability with the lives of his whole family. And I, too, know you are capable. You are going to be commander-in-chief and I hope you will not refuse.”

“But what if the officers do not obey me?”

“Here is authority!” said Sun Quan, taking his own sword from his side. “Slay the disobedient first and report to me afterwards.”

“I am grateful for your trust and I dare not refuse. But I pray you will assemble all the officials and confer the office upon me in their presence.”

Kan Ze said, “The practice of the ancients was to set up an altar on which to present the commander-elect a white yak’s tail, a golden ax, the seal of office, and the military commission. Then his authority would be firmly established. It would be well to follow the old rule. Choose a good day and appoint Lu Xun before all the world. Thus no one will defy his leadership.”

The building of an altar was begun at once and as soon as it was finished a great assembly was called. Lu Xun was requested to ascend the altar, where he was formally appointed Commander-in-chief and Marquis of Lou and conferred the sword of authority and the seal of office. He was authorized to command all the forces in the six districts and the eighty-one towns as well as the forces in Jingzhou.

In assigning him the vital position Sun Quan said, “Within the capital I rule—outside it, you command.”

Lu Xun then descended from the altar. He chose Xu Sheng and Ding Feng as commanders of his guards, and the army lost no time in taking the field. Land and marine forces were deployed, and a dispatch was sent to the two commanders near Xiaoting.

Han Dang and Zhou Tai were much upset at this appointment of a mere bookish fellow to command them. So when the new commander-in-chief came they all showed their discontent with a lack of enthusiasm. Lu Xun went to his tent and

summoned his officers for counsel, and they manifested only sullen respect and reluctant deference.

Lu Xun addressed them: “By order of our lord I am commander-in-chief of all the forces, and my commission is to destroy Shu. You, gentlemen, all know the conventional military rules, and you will do well to obey them. The law is no respecter of persons, as those who disobey will find out. Do not regret when it is too late.”

They fell into a sullen silence. Then Zhou Tai said, “At present Sun Huan, nephew of our prince, is besieged at Yiling, anxious for food and relief forces. I venture to request you to get him out of his plight with a wonderful scheme so as to set the prince’s heart at peace.”

Lu Xun replied, “I know General Sun is well-loved by his men and he can surely maintain his position. There is no need to go to his aid. When Shu is broken the siege will be lifted.”

They all snickered as they left the tent, and Han Dang did not fail to express his contempt for the newly appointed commander.

“This will be the end of Wu,” he said to Zhou Tai. “Did you note what he said?”

“I asked him that question purposely to see how he would respond,” said Zhou Tai. “And he had no plan whatsoever. He will destroy Shu indeed!”

The next day general orders were issued for a strict defense of all posts, which provoked more laughter among the officers,

who thought him cowardly and resolved to disregard his command. So once more Lu Xun assembled them and said, “I am authorized by the prince to command. Yesterday I gave orders for defense to be firmly observed. Why have they been disobeyed?”

Han Dang spoke up. “Since I first followed General Sun (Sun Jian) in conquering the region south of the Yangtze I have been in hundreds of battles. The other officers have either fought under his eldest son, Sun Ce, or the present prince. All of us are valiant fighters who have braved every kind of danger, adorned in our armor and armed with our sharp-edged weapons. Now, sir, you have been placed in supreme command to repulse Shu, and you should design some definite plan of campaign at once, making dispositions of our forces and directing us to advance toward that great end. But instead of that you tell us to strengthen our defense and forbid us to fight. What are we to wait for? Will Heaven destroy our opponents for us? We are not afraid to die. Why is our keen fighting spirit left to be eaten away and our energy wasted in idleness?”

All the others applauded this speech. “General Han is right. We are willing to fight a decisive battle against our enemy,” they cried in unison.

The new general waited till the uproar had subsided. Then drawing his sword, he shouted, “Though I am but a student of books, I have been entrusted with a great task, a task for which the prince considers me competent and for the performance of which I am prepared to bear all the responsibilities. As for you, you will do well to act on the

defensive as I ordered and not allow yourselves to act rashly. Whoever dares to disobey will be put to death!"

This speech only angered his officers more and they dispersed in resentment.

As has been mentioned, the First Ruler had set up altogether forty camps covering seven hundred li, starting from Xiaoting and reaching back to the borders of Shu. These camps looked very imposing, with their numerous fluttering banners that obscured the sun by day and their fires that illumined the sky at night. Here the Fist Ruler received a report of the arrival of the new commander of the Wu army and his policy of strong defense.

"What sort of a man is this Lu Xun?" he asked.

"He is famous as a scholar among the people of Wu and, though young, he is very talented and full of guile," replied Ma Liang. "He was the author of the crafty plan that led to the fall of Jingzhou."

The First Ruler became very angry. "That brat! His cunning scheme caused the death of my two brothers. I must capture him this time."

He gave orders to advance. Ma Liang tried to dissuade him. "Be very careful," he said. "This Lu Xun is no inferior to Zhou Yu in talent."

"I have fought so many battles," retorted the First Ruler. "Do you think I am no match for this callow youth?"

He himself led the army to attack key positions of the Wu army. Han Dang notified his chief of this and Lu Xun, afraid that his officers might disobey his defensive order, hastened to the scene of danger. He found Han Tang on a hill surveying the enemy's force, which advanced like a great wave. Then the commander and his veteran general rode side by side to look. Amidst the army they saw now and again a wide yellow umbrella, and Han Tang pointed it out to his chief.

"That must be Liu Bei," he said. "I should like to attack him."

"Be careful," said Lu Xun. "So far he has scored victory after victory, and his men are very keen and confident. Our best policy is to maintain a careful defense of the heights and dangerous passes and not to go forth to battle. If you do, you will lose. Impress this upon your officers and men and make them understand the strategy. Follow closely the enemy's movements and wait for mishaps to occur. They are now smug and complacent, riding freely in the wide open space of the plain. We will observe a determined defense and ignore any challenge to battle. As their desire for war is unsatisfied they will move their camps beside hills and into the forests. Then I will spring a surprise attack to defeat them."

Han Dang agreed so far as words went, but in his heart he was still unconvinced.

When the Shu army drew near, the First Ruler ordered his vanguard force to challenge. They shouted all sorts of abuse and hurled taunts to put their opponents to shame, but Lu Xun took no notice and told his men to simply turn a deaf ear. He would not allow them to go out to battle, but he went from

fort to redoubt, encouraging the soldiers to remain on the defensive.

The First Ruler's heart burned inside at this refusal to come out to do battle, and it angered him furthermore that Ma Liang drummed into him how clever Lu Xun was.

"Your Majesty's troops have come from afar and this war has lasted from spring to summer," said Ma Liang. "His refusing to fight can only mean he is waiting for some mishaps to occur in our army so that he may profit. Please consider this."

"What ruse can he have?" said Liu Bei contemptuously. "He is only afraid, I say. Their army has suffered nothing but defeat so far. They dare not come out to meet us."

One day Feng Xi came to see the First Ruler and said, "The weather is scorching and the troops are camped in the full glare of the sun. And it is very inconvenient for them to get water."

Therefore the First Ruler gave an order to move the camps into the shade of the forest or by the brooks and streams till the summer heat was over. Feng Xi took the order and arranged the moving of the troops to shady spots.

But Ma Liang was dubious about the wisdom of this move. "If the enemy rush out on us while we are moving camp, we will be hard pushed to defend ourselves."

"I have already thought about that," said the First Ruler. "I will send Wu Ban with 10,000 of our weaker soldiers to encamp near their lines. But I will choose 8,000 veterans and

place them in ambush. When Lu Xun knows that we are moving camp he will surely take the opportunity to come out and attack us. I will tell Wu Ban to flee before his men and lead them into my ambush. Then I will cut off their retreat. This Lu Xun will be captured, I think."

"A genius in planning and a marvel in prevision," extolled all those about him as this plan was explained. "None of us can approach Your Majesty's wisdom."

However, Ma Liang ventured to suggest something different. "They say the prime minister is on a tour of inspection of various passes in the eastern part of Shu, to guard against any possible attacks from Wei. Why not send him a sketch of your present dispositions of troops and ask his opinion?"

"I am also quite familiar with the art of war," replied the First Ruler. "I see no reason why we should ask the prime minister."

Ma Liang responded: "The ancients said, 'Listen to both sides and you will be clear-minded; listen to only one side and you will be in the dark.' I hope Your Majesty will consider this."

"Well, then, you go round to all the camps and make four to eight maps and take them to the prime minister. If he finds any fault, come and tell me at once."

So Ma Liang went away while the First Ruler busied himself with getting his men into shelter, out of the fierce heat of the sun. The move was quickly discovered by the enemy scouts and reported to Han Dang and Zhou Tai, who rejoiced at the

news and soon went to tell Lu Xun that all the enemies' camps had been moved into the shade.

"Now, sir, you can attack!" they urged.

'Twas not a bad plan of Shu, an ambush to lay,
Should the men of Wu go out they would soon be slain.

Lu Xun's reaction to their advice will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* A gesture expressing joy by the ancient Chinese.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FOUR

Lu Xun Burns His Enemy's Seven Hundred Li of Camps

Zhuge Liang Cleverly Plans the Eight Arrays

The last chapter closed with Han Dang and Zhou Tai coming to report to their commander that the First Ruler had shifted camp in search of shade from the sun and the news was very welcome to Lu Xun. He went with them to see for himself and to observe the new position. Encamped on the level plain below was a troop of about 10,000 men who appeared to be mostly old and weak soldiers. On the banner of their leader he read the name Wu Ban.

"To me these men are mere weeds," said Zhou Tai. "Let me and General Han go out and smite them. If we do not win we will pay the penalty."

The commander-in-chief made no reply, but remained surveying the ground before him. Pointing with his whip at the valley ahead, he said, "Down there is an air of slaughter. They must have set an ambush there. These poor troops in the foreground are nothing but a bait. You gentlemen are not to leave your positions under any circumstances."

His officers took this only as another proof of his cowardice. The next day Wu Ban's men approached closer and

challenged them to battle, swaggering about and brandishing their weapons and shouting volleys of abuse without end. They manifested contempt by throwing off their armor and clothing, exposing their bodies and naked forms, blatantly unready to fight. Some even sat or lay asleep.

Two other officers went to the commander's tent to complain of these insults and ask for permission to go out and punish the enemy, but Lu Xun only smiled.

"You rely only on your brute courage, but you are not aware of the wonderful schemes of war laid down by the ancient strategists Sun Tzu and Wu Qi. This display is only meant to entice us out to fight. You will see their trick yourselves in three days."

"In three days they will have completed their change of camp and will be too strongly positioned for us to win," the officers replied.

"I want them to move their camp."

These two left the tent also snickering. But three days later he assembled all the officers at a lookout point from where they saw that Wu Ban's men had left.

"The air of slaughter is rising," said Lu Xun. "Liu Bei will soon appear from the valley."

He was right. Very soon they saw a whole army, all well accoutered, pass across the field escorting the First Ruler. And the sight took away all their courage.

“That is why I would not listen to your wish to fight,” said Lu Xun. “Now that the ambush is withdrawn we can strike them in about ten days.”

“The proper time to attack was at the very beginning. Now after about seven months’ standoff with us they are firmly established in their encampments stretching hundreds of li. How can they be destroyed?”

“You people do not seem to understand the strategies of warfare. This Liu Bei is powerful as well as crafty. When he first started on this expedition his methods were of the best, but after a long period of inaction his men are slack in discipline and his thoughts cease to be clear. That will be our time to attack.”

At last they agreed with their chief.
The general discoursed on war,
According to the book.
Craftily the bait for the whale
Was put upon the hook.
Though famous men were many,
Commander Lu of the South
At least stands high as any.

Only then were his officers convinced of his capability as a commander. After he had decided on his plan to crush the Shu army he wrote to Sun Quan, giving full details of his design and promising that victory was to be expected at any day.

“We have found another remarkably able man,” said Sun Quan, “and I have no further anxiety. They all wrote to say

that he was cowardly, but I knew better. This plan shows he is not at all a coward."

Then he mustered the remainder of his forces to reinforce his commander.

Meanwhile, the First Ruler had ordered all his marine forces to sail down the river and take up positions along the banks deep inside the territory of Wu.

Huang Quan, however, spoke against this: "It is easy enough for the ships to go downstream, but how about returning? Let me make the first advance, and Your Majesty can follow in the rear. Then there will be no danger of anything going wrong."

"Those Wu dogs are scared," objected the First Ruler. "What can go wrong if I make a dash at them?"

Although many others also tried very hard to dissuade him from taking such a great risk, the First Ruler would not heed any of them. Then dividing the army into two portions, he placed Huang Quan in command on the northern bank to keep a watch on Wei, while he commanded the force on the southern bank. They made encampments on both sides of the river.

Spies of Wei duly reported these moves to Cao Pi, who laughed aloud when he heard of Liu Bei's long line of camps among the trees and beside streams.

"Liu Bei is going to be defeated," he said.

“How do you know?” asked his courtiers.

“Liu Bei does not know the strategies of war. How can he beat off an enemy along an encampment of seven hundred li? The tenets of war forbid camping in open plains, among marshes, or amid precipitous heights. He will lose the battle to Lu Xun, and we will hear of it in ten days.”

His courtiers felt more than doubtful and entreated their master to prepare an army. But Cao Pi replied, “If he wins, Lu Xun will lead all his force westward to seize Shu and his country will be defenseless. Then, under the pretense of sending help, I will order my army to set out in three divisions, and I will overcome Wu easily.”

They all bowed to him in admiration.

Without delay he ordered Cao Ren to lead an army to Ruxu, Cao Xiu to take another to Dongkou, and Cao Zhen to command a third one to Nanjun. The three armies were to merge on a given date for a surprise attack on Wu. Cao Pi himself would go and support them later with the main force.

Here it is necessary to follow Ma Liang’s journey back to Shu to see Zhuge Liang. On arriving at Chengdu, he lost no time in seeing the prime minister and presenting the maps of the army’s encampment. He said, “Now the forces are stationed on both sides of the river in forty camps, extending along a front of seven hundred li. Each camp is either beside a stream or brook, among thick growths of trees. At our lord’s command I prepared these maps and he sent me to ask your opinion.”

Zhuge Liang took the maps and looked at them. “Who advised the Emperor in such an arrangement? He ought to be put to death, whoever he was,” he cried in despair, striking the table with his fist.

“It is entirely our lord’s own work; no one else had any hand in it,” replied Ma Liang.

“The days of the Hans are gone indeed,” sighed Zhuge Liang.

“Why do you say so?” asked Ma Liang.

“Our lord has committed most serious faults against the rules of war. The camps are built among thick groves or beside streams, where free movements are impossible, and nothing can save the army if the enemy uses fire. Besides, what defense is possible along a seven hundred li front? Disaster is imminent and Lu Xun has anticipated it all, which explains his obstinate refusal to come out into the open. Go back as quickly as you can and tell our lord that it is imperative the camps be changed at once.”

“But what if I am too late? If Wu has already attacked and won.”

“The enemy will not dare to pursue our troops into Chengdu for fear of attacks from Wei. So this city is secure. If our lord is in danger, tell him to take shelter in the city of Baidi. Before I came here I had already placed 10,000 men in ambush at Fishbelly Creek.”

Ma Liang was astonished. “How can that be? I have been up and down that creek several times without seeing a single soldier. Why do you try to deceive me, sir?”

“You will see later—don’t ask so many questions now.”

Carrying the great strategist’s letter, Ma Liang hastened back to the imperial camp, while Zhuge Liang went to the capital to prepare relief forces.

Seeing the men of Shu become slack and idle and no longer maintaining adequate defense, Lu Xun decided that his moment to strike had arrived, so he called his officers to his tent to receive orders.

“There has been no fighting since I received our lord’s command. But in the meantime I have acquired a good knowledge of the enemy. As a preliminary operation I want to capture a camp on the south bank. Who will volunteer to go?”

Out stepped Han Dang, Zhou Tai, and Ling Tong, all three at once, each crying that he wanted to be sent. But the commander did not want any of them. Instead he called up the junior officer, Chunyu Dan, and said to him: “I will give you 5,000 men to take the fourth camp on the south bank. It is held by Fu Tong. I will send more troops to support you.”

When Chunyu Dan had gone he summoned Xu Sheng and Ding Feng, to whom he said, “You two each take 3,000 men and position yourselves five li distance from the camp. If your colleague is repulsed and pursued, go out and rescue him—but do not pursue the enemy.”

Chunyu Dan started at dusk but when he reached the Shu camp it was already past midnight. Amidst the beating of drums his men attacked at once. Their opponents came out, led by Fu Tong, who set his spear and rode straight toward Chunyu Dan and forced him back. Suddenly there arose the roll of other drums and a troop under another Shu officer barred the way. Chunyu Dan managed to escape, but many of his men were lost.

However, he was not yet safe. Some distance farther he encountered the barbarian leader, Shamoke. After a desperate fight Chunyu Dan broke through, pursued now by three parties. Soon he reached the spot five li from the Wu camp and here his two colleagues emerged to rescue him. Once the men of Shu withdrew, Chunyu Dan was escorted back to camp.

He had been wounded by an arrow, and with the arrow still undrawn he went in to see Lu Xun and pleaded guilty for his failure.

“It was no fault of yours,” said the commander. “I wanted to test the strength of our enemy. My plan of attack is quite ready.”

“The enemy is very strong and cannot be easily overcome,” said Xu Sheng and Ding Feng. “We will only suffer a great loss to no purpose.”

“This plan of mine will not be able to deceive Zhuge Liang, but fortunately he is not here. His absence will allow me to score a great success.”

Then he summoned his officers to receive orders. Zhu Ran, leading the marine force, was to fill his ships with reeds and straw and advance after noon the next day, when the southeasterly wind would be strong. Han Dang was to attack the north bank, while Zhou Tai, the south bank. Each soldier, in addition to his weapons, was to carry a bundle of straw or reeds with sulfur and niter hidden inside, as well as a piece of tinder. When they reached the enemy encampment they were to start a conflagration at every other camp, twenty in all, leaving the other half to the care of the wind. All the troops were to take with them their own food for the expedition and advance day and night, without pause, until they captured Liu Bei. Taking their orders, the officers and men set out.

In the meantime the First Ruler was in his own camp, pondering over a plan to destroy Sun Quan, when suddenly the great standard in front of his own tent fell over and lay flat on the ground. There was no wind to account for this, so he turned to the libationer Cheng Ji and asked him what it might portend.

"Could it mean that the men of Wu will raid the camp tonight?" he answered.

"They will not dare to come again after the defeat of yesterday."

"But maybe that was only a reconnaissance—what then?"

Just then a report came in to say that the men of Wu were seen from far off moving eastward along the hills.

“These are only meant to put us off the scent,” said the First Ruler. He ordered the officers not to move but told his two nephews, with five hundred mounted men, to go out to investigate. It was dusk when these two returned to report fire among the camps on the north bank. The First Ruler hastily sent Guan Xing to the northern bank and Zhang Bao to the opposite side to find out what was really happening.

“If the men of Wu have come, let me know at once.”

And the two cousins set out. About the first watch a strong southeasterly wind rose. Then fire broke out on the left side of the imperial camp; before guards could be sent to extinguish this flame another fire was spotted on its right. With the aid of the strong wind both fires became fierce, and soon the trees also caught the flame. A confused roar showed the gathering strength of the fire, as the soldiers of the burning imperial camp rushed out to escape for their lives. In their confusion they trampled on each other. Many died under the heels of their fellow men.

Behind them came the men of Wu, bent on blood. Ignorant of how many they might be, the First Ruler mounted and dashed for Feng Xi’s camp, only to find it also swallowed up by flames that seemed to reach the very sky. By this time raging fires were burning on both banks of the river, making the night as bright as day.

Feng Xi leaped on his horse and fled, followed by a few of his mounted men. This small force ran into the men of Wu under Xu Sheng and the two fought. Seeing this the First Ruler turned and galloped toward the west. Xu Sheng saw him and at once went in pursuit, throwing aside his opponent. The

First Ruler was quite alarmed but worse was yet to come. Presently another party of soldiers under Ding Feng blocked his way and he became really scared, caught between two enemy troops. There was no possibility of escape—no road was open.

Just at this moment, however, one of his own troops broke through the encirclement and rescued him. Its leader was Zhang Bao, who, leading the Imperial Guard, escorted the First Ruler in the flight. Soon they fell in with Fu Tong and his men. The two forces combined and continued their escape, with the Wu army following in hot pursuit. The fugitives finally reached a hill, called the Saddle Hill. Here the First Ruler was urged to mount the hilltop to avoid immediate danger. But almost at once thundering shouts rose underneath as Lu Xun's main army arrived and the hill was completely surrounded. The two officers strove desperately to hold the path up the hill and keep the enemy from ascending. Looking from the summit the First Ruler saw the whole wilderness turning into an endless line of fire and numerous corpses of his men being washed downstream in heaps.

Soon the men of Wu set themselves to burning the hill. The First Ruler's remaining escort ran hither and thither, like rats in horror, and their lord was in despair. Suddenly he saw in the fire an officer, followed by a few horsemen, cutting his way through and coming up the hill. As he drew nearer the First Ruler recognized him to be Guan Xing, who quickly dismounted and bowed to the ground, saying, "Your Majesty, the fire is rampant all round and this place is not safe at all. Please leave immediately for the city of Baidi, where you can regroup your forces."

“Who dares to stay behind to keep off the enemy?” inquired the First Ruler.

Fu Tong volunteered for this most dangerous task. At dusk they started, with Guan Xing leading the way, his cousin in the middle, and Fu Tong holding the rear. Keeping their lord firmly in their protection the three officers and their men dashed down the hill and ran westward. The men of Wu, each anxious to gain the greatest merit by the capture of the First Ruler, pressed forward in pursuit. The pursuing troops were so great in number that they seemed to blot out the sky and cover the entire earth. The First Ruler ordered the men to make fires from their clothing and armor in the road to hold back the pursuers.

But the danger was far from past. Soon, another force led by Zhu Ran came up from the riverside and intercepted the First Ruler’s troops amid terrifying shouts.

“This is my end!” cried the First Ruler in utter despair.

His two nephews dashed to the front, attempting to cut a way through, but returned wounded by enemy arrows and could no longer fight. Worse was still to come. Shouting arose from behind and Lu Xun, with his main army, came rushing up from the valley.

At about the first glimpse of dawn their case seemed hopeless. But just as things were at their worst they saw Zhu Ran’s men suddenly begin to break up and scatter, tumbling into streams or rolling down precipices. To his immense relief, the First Ruler found that his faithful general, Zhao Yun, had come to his rescue.

Zhao Yun had been in Jiangzhou, and the news of the battle between his country and Wu had reached him there. So he had set out at once. On the way he saw the towering flames in the southeast, which filled his heart with apprehension. He sent scouts to find out what had happened. When he learned that his lord was in dire straits he rushed at the fastest speed and arrived just in time to save him.

As soon as Lu Xun heard that it was Zhao Yun who had appeared, he ordered the retreat. Zhao Yun came upon Zhu Ran, whom he slew with his spear in the first encounter. The men of Wu dispersed and retreated, and the First Ruler proceeded toward the city of Baidi.

“Though I am safe, what about the other officers?” asked the First Ruler.

“The pursuers are close upon us and we cannot wait,” said Zhao Yun. “Pray get into the city as quickly as possible and I will go back to rescue the others.”

When the First Ruler reached Baidi he had only about a hundred men left.

A poem was written concerning the victory of Lu Xun:

He grips the spear and kindles fire, the camps are swept away.
Liu Bei to Baidi city flees, lonely and sad today.
But Lu Xun’s meteoric fame now shoots through Shu and Wei,
For the scholar the Prince of Wu has naught but good to say.

Fu Tong, who commanded the rear, was surrounded by the enemy.

Ding Feng shouted to him, “You had better surrender. Many of your men have fallen, more have surrendered, and your lord is a prisoner. You have no hope against us with your scanty force.”

But Fu Tong replied, “I am a general of Han—I will never give in to the curs of Wu!”

Undaunted, he rode at his opponents and fought over a hundred bouts, trying to break through the encroachment. But all his effort was in vain and in the end he died among his enemies.

A poem celebrates his valor:

Wu, at Yiling, strove with Shu,
Flames, not swords, used crafty Lu.
Worthy of a place among
Han’s bold captains is Fu Tong.

The libationer Cheng Ji, having got clear of the battle, rode swiftly to the riverbank and called to the marines to join in the battle. They landed, but as they saw the men of Wu coming in pursuit they soon started to flee. One of his officers shouted to him to run for his life, for the men of Wu were drawing near, but he answered angrily: “Since I first followed my lord I have never run before a foe.”

Hardly had he finished speaking when the enemy came up and surrounded him. There being no way out, he took his life with his own sword.

Noble among the warriors of Shu was Cheng Ji.
He kept his sword for the service of his prince.
When danger pressed near he wavered not,
So his name remains forever honored.

Now Wu Ban and Zhang Nan had been besieging Yiling, when Feng Xi arrived to tell them of the plight of their lord, so they led off their army to rescue him. The siege of Yiling was then lifted as Lu Xun had foretold would happen.

As the three officers and their men hurried along, their progress was suddenly halted by the men of Wu both in front and behind, for as soon Sun Huan was free he set off in pursuit of his late besiegers. A battle was fought, during which both Feng Xi and Zhang Nan perished. Only Wu Ban broke through. He was pursued, but he luckily fell in with Zhao Yun and got safely to Baidi.

The barbarian chieftain Shamoke was flying from the battlefield all alone when he met Zhou Tai, who slew him after a short fight. Several Shu officers surrendered to Wu, as did many soldiers. Of the supplies and weapons in the camps of Shu, nothing was saved.

When the news of the defeat of Shu reached Lady Sun, and with it the rumor that the First Ruler had been killed in battle, she gave herself up to unutterable grief. She went down to the riverbank in her carriage and, gazing westward, wept and lamented. Then she threw herself into the stream and was

drowned. A temple called the Shrine of the Bold Beauty was erected for posterity on the shore, and a poem was dedicated to her memory:

The king, defeated, fled, and rumor said he'd died;
His consort in deep grief committed suicide.
A stele stands by the stream even today
To tell all how heroic the lady had died.

Lu Xun had by then won a sweeping victory. Anxious to push his advantage as far as possible, he led his exultant army westward. But as he drew near Gui Pass he suddenly pulled up his horse, for he sensed an aura of death emanating from between the hills and the river.

"There must be an ambush," he said and ordered the army to stop advancing.

So they retreated about a dozen li and formed a battle array in the wide open ground, bracing themselves against any sudden attack. Meanwhile, scouts were sent out to reconnoiter. They returned reporting no soldiers ahead. Lu Xun doubted their words and climbed an elevation from where he could survey the country. The aura was still visible to him and so he dispatched more scouts to investigate. But he received the same report: there was not a man nor a horse in front.

Still, as the sun was about to sink in the west he could see the air of death accentuated, and he felt gravely worried. Again he sent men to find out, this time his own confidants, who returned to say that there were only about a hundred heaps of boulders by the riverbank, but no soldiers nor horses.

The commander, greatly puzzled, called in several natives to ask them about the stones.

“Who put the stones in heaps there?” he asked. “Why is there an air of death arising?”

“This place is called Fishbelly Creek. Before Zhuge Liang went west into Shu he came here with a lot of soldiers and heaped up the boulders like that on the sandy shore. Since then vapor has often risen from inside the place.”

Lu Xun decided to go and look at this arrangement of boulders himself. So he rode off with a small escort. Looking down at the stones from a slope he saw the boulders were evidently arranged like a battle formation. There were entrances and exits.

“That is nothing but a useless trick!” he laughed.

Intent on examining the mysterious arrangement more closely, he rode down the slope with several of his men and went in among the stones. Presently his followers called his attention to the increasing darkness and asked him to return to camp. But as he was looking for an exit, a sudden squall came on, sending the dust whirling up in the air, obscuring both the sky and earth. And in the swirl the stones reared themselves up like steep mountains, pointed as sharp swords, and the sand and soil shaped themselves into hillocks, one behind the other, while the roar of the billowing water was like the rolling of drums in a battle.

“I have fallen into Zhuge Liang’s trick,” cried Lu Xun, now greatly alarmed.

He tried to get out but could find no exit. As he stood in apprehension, not knowing what to do, an old man suddenly appeared and asked, “Do you wish to go out, General?”

“I earnestly desire that you will lead me out, venerable sir,” he replied.

Leaning on his staff, the old man quietly and slowly conducted Lu Xun outside, without difficulty. When he was safe once again on the slope Lu Xun asked his aged guide who he was.

“I am Zhuge Liang’s father-in-law; my name is Huang Cheng-yan. My son-in-law placed these boulders here as you see them, and he said they represented the battle formation of the ‘Eight Arrays.’ There are eight gates, which are named respectively Rest, Life, Injury, Obstruction, Prospect, Death, Surprise, and Opening. They are capable of infinite mutations and are equal to 100,000 soldiers. Before he left he told me that a major general of Wu would be trapped in them sometime later and asked me not to conduct him outside. From a hill nearby I saw you enter at the Gate of Death, and I guessed you were ignorant of the scheme and would become entangled. But I am of a kindly disposition and could not bear to see you entrapped without the possibility of escape, so I came to guide you to the Gate of Life.”

“Have you studied this matter, sir?” asked Lu Xun.

“The variations are inexhaustible, and I could not learn them all.”

Lu Xun dismounted, bowed low before the old man, and then rode away.

The famous poet Du Fu* wrote a poem to praise Zhuge Liang:

Founder of a kingdom; no small praise
Is his; inventor of the Eight Arrays
And for that famous. On the river's brim,
Firm set, the boulders stand as placed by him.
No current rolls them down. Time's waters, too
Drown not regret, he did not conquer Wu.

Lu Xun went to his camp in deep thought.

"This Zhuge Liang is well named 'Sleeping Dragon.' I'm not his equal." Then, to the amazement of all, he gave orders for all the forces to return home. His officers ventured to voice their objection, arguing that they had been so successful.

"General, you have thoroughly broken the enemy, and Liu Bei is at the end of his tethers now that he is besieged in one small city. It seems the best moment to annihilate him yet you want to withdraw just because you have come across a mysterious arrangement of stones. Why?"

"I'm not afraid of the stones, and it is not on their account that I order retreat. What I fear is Cao Pi of Wei, who is no less cunning than his father, and when he hears I'm chasing Liu Bei into Shu he will certainly attack us. It will be hard to return then."

So he ordered an officer to guard the rear while he himself led the main force to begin its homeward journey. On the second

day scouts brought urgent reports that three mighty armies of Wei had advanced at three different points and were moving very fast toward the borders of Wu.

“Just as I anticipated,” said Lu Xun. “But I’m ready for them.”

“And now the west is mine,” the victor thought,
“But beware of the north,” discretion taught.

The story of the withdrawal will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Du Fu (A.D. 712–770) was one of the most famous poets of the Tang dynasty.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-FIVE

Liu Bei Leaves His Son in Zhuge Liang's Care

Zhuge Liang Peacefully Settles the Five Attacks

It was in the sixth month of the second year of Zhang Wu (A.D. 222) that Lu Xun destroyed the army of Shu at Xiaoting and forced the First Ruler to seek refuge in Baidi, where Zhao Yun marshaled the defense. When Ma Liang returned from Chengdu, he found to his deepest remorse that the battle was already lost. He related what Zhuge Liang had told him to the First Ruler, who said with a deep sigh: "If I had listened to the prime minister's advice this defeat would not have happened. Now how can I face returning to my courtiers at the capital?"

So he decided to stay on in the city of Baidi and named the guesthouse the Palace of Eternal Peace. He was deeply grieved when he learned of the death of so many of his officers. Then he was told that Huang Quan, who had been given command of the marine force on the north bank, had surrendered to Wei. His officials suggested arresting the family of the renegade but he disagreed. "He was cut off from us by the men of Wu, and he had no alternative but to surrender to Wei. It was I who failed him, not he me. Why should I take vengeance on his family?" And he continued issuing money and grain to his family so that they would not suffer from want.

Away in Wei, Huang Quan was led before Cao Pi, who asked, "You have come to surrender to me—is it because you desire to imitate the admirable conduct of Chen Pin and Han Xin* of old?"

Huang Quan replied tearfully, "The Emperor of Shu has been very kind to me, and he gave me the command of the marine forces on the north bank. But I was cut off by Lu Xun and could not return to Shu, and as I must not surrender to Wu, I can only yield to Your Majesty. Defeated as I am, I should be only too happy if my life were spared. How dare I attempt to imitate the virtuous ones of old?"

The reply satisfied the ruler of Wei, and he conferred a prestigious title on Huang Quan, who, however, declined the honor. Then it was reported that the family members of Huang Quan had been put to death. However, he did not believe it could be true, saying, "The Emperor of Shu and myself have the greatest confidence in each other. He knows I would not have surrendered of my own free will, and he would not injure my family."

And the ruler of Wei agreed.

But a poem was written to upbraid Huang Quan:

'Twas a pity that Huang Quan grudged to die;
Though he yielded to Wei, not Wu,
Yet he crooked the knee in an alien court, which the loyal will not do.
And the judgment of historians condemns such men all through.

Cao Pi sought advice from Jia Xu concerning his design of bringing the whole country under his own rule.

"I want to bring the whole empire under my rule—which should I first overcome, Shu or Wu?"

"Liu Bei is an able warrior, and Zhuge Liang a most capable strategist, whereas Sun Quan knows how to use his men and his general Lu Xun is in firm control of all the key positions. There are the natural obstacles, too. The intervening rivers and spreading lakes are hard to overcome. I do not think you have any leader to match either of these two men. Even with the prestige of Your Majesty's own presence, the result would still be unpredictable. A better course is to await changes to occur within the two places."

"I have already dispatched three armies against Wu; can it be that they will fail?"

Another official, Liu Ye, held the same opinion as his colleague. He said, "Since Lu Xun has just won a major victory over the huge army of Shu, his officers and men will be full of confidence. And the lakes and the Yangtze are natural difficulties and hard to cope with. Lu Xun is resourceful and he will be prepared for these attacks."

Cao Pi said, "Not long ago, sir, you urged me to attack Wu; why are you against it now?"

"Because the times have changed. At that time Wu was suffering one defeat after another and their whole country was so depressed that it could be easily smitten. Now this great

victory has changed everything. Their morale has increased a hundredfold so it is not advisable to attack them now."

"Well, I have made up my mind to attack. Say no more."

He then decided to lead the Imperial Guards out to support his three armies. But scouts soon brought news justifying the opinion of his advisors. Wu had sent opposing forces to deal with his three armies. Liu Ye again tried to dissuade him from launching the attack, arguing that his enemy was fully prepared, but the emperor was obstinate and went on with his campaign.

The Wu officer, Zhu Huan, who had been sent to oppose Cao Ren at Ruxu, was a young man of twenty-seven. Bold and resourceful, he was a great favorite with his lord. Hearing that Cao Ren was going to attack Xian xi, Zhu Huan dispatched the bulk of his men there to defend the city, leaving only 5,000 in Ruxu. Then he heard that the van of the enemy, under Chang Diao, was advancing swiftly toward Ruxu. As they were ten times outnumbered, his soldiers were quite frightened. Drawing his sword, Zhu Huan said, "Success depends upon the leader rather than the number of men. The Art of War says, 'It is possible for the host army to defeat the guest army even when it is twice outnumbered. Now the enemy is weary from a long march, while we are fully rested in this high-walled city, protected further on the south side by the Yangtze and on the north by the mountains. Success should be ours for sure. Even if Cao Pi himself comes, we need have no anxiety, let alone Cao Ren and his lot."

Then he issued an order to furl all the banners and to silence all the drums, as if the city was not defended.

In time, Chang Diao and his veterans of the van came to attack the city. As he saw no soldiers guarding the city, he hastened forward with full speed. But as he got near, suddenly there was a loud explosion. Immediately up rose a forest of flags and out galloped Zhu Huan from the city gate with his sword drawn, making straight at Chang Diao. In the third encounter Zhu Huan cut down his enemy and his men, taking advantage of the victory, thoroughly routed the invaders, slaying innumerable men and capturing many flags, weapons, and horses. Cao Ren himself, coming up later, was attacked by Zhu Huan's men at Xianxi and also routed. He went to see Cao Pi and related how he came to be defeated. The ruler of Wei was quite startled but before he could decide what course to take regarding this loss, news came of the defeat of his two other armies. Cao Pi sighed and said sadly, "This has come from my willfulness and neglect of advice."

It was summer time and a pestilence claimed the lives of a huge number of soldiers. So he ordered withdrawal into Luoyang. From then on the two countries of Wei and Wu were in conflict again.

Meanwhile Liu Bei was failing. He was confined to bed in his palace at the city of Baidi. In the fourth moon of the third year of Zhang Wu his condition deteriorated so rapidly that he felt that the end was near. Besides, he wept so much for his two lost brothers that his eyesight suffered. That night he was especially morose and ill-tempered—he could not bear any of his courtiers near him. Therefore he ordered them all out and lay upon his couch, sad and solitary.

A sudden gust of wind came into the chamber, almost extinguishing the candles. As they burned bright again he saw two men standing in the shade.

"I said I felt rather disturbed and told you to leave me alone," said the First Ruler angrily. "Why have you come back? Go!"

But they did not move. Therefore he rose to look at them. To his great surprise he saw they were his two brothers, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei.

"So you're still alive, brothers!" he said.

"We're not men but spirits," said Guan Yu. "The Supreme Lord has created us gods in consideration of our faithfulness throughout our lives, and 'ere long, brother, we three will be together again."

The First Ruler clutched at the figures and burst into tears. Suddenly he awoke and the two figures vanished. He called in his people and asked them about the time. It was exactly midnight.

"My time is near," he said with a sigh.

Messengers were at once sent to the capital to summon Zhuge Liang and some other high-ranking officials to receive the First Ruler's last instructions. They came with his two younger sons. The eldest, the heir-apparent, was left in charge of the capital.

Zhuge Liang saw that his master was seriously ill. He bowed to the ground at the foot of his bed. The dying ruler told him

to come near and sit beside him. Patting his faithful minister on the back, he said, “Thanks to your effort I have been most fortunate to attain the title of emperor. But I was stupid not to follow your advice and so bring about the recent disaster on myself. My remorse has led to my disease and now I’m going to die. My heir is a weakling and I must leave the state’s affairs in your care.”

As he finished speaking tears flowed down his cheeks freely.

“Pray take good care of yourself, Your Majesty,” implored Zhuge Liang, also in tears.

Glancing at the people in the chamber, the First Ruler saw Ma Shu, brother of Ma Liang. He told him to retire. When he had left the chamber, the First Ruler asked Zhuge Liang, “What do you think of him?”

“He is also one of the ablest men of the time,” replied Zhuge Liang.

“I don’t think so,” said the First Ruler. “I find him prone to exaggeration and not to be entrusted with important tasks. Watch him carefully, sir.”

Having said this, he told the attendants to summon the high-ranking officials of the state to the chamber. Taking paper and writing brush, the First Ruler wrote his testament. He handed it to Zhuge Liang with a sigh and said, “I’m no scholar and I know only roughly what should be learned. But the great sage said, ‘A bird’s song is sad when death is near and a dying man’s words are good.’ I had wished that together we might destroy Cao Cao’s men and restore the

Hans, but before the mission is fulfilled I have to bid you farewell. I hope you will give my last command to my eldest son and heir. Tell him my words are to be taken seriously. And I trust that you will guide him in everything."

Zhuge Liang, as well as all those present, kneeling and weeping, replied: "Pray repose yourself, Your Majesty. We will do our utmost to prove our gratitude for your kindness and trust."

At the First Ruler's order the attendants helped Zhuge Liang to his feet. With one hand the dying man brushed away the falling tears, while with the other he grasped Zhuge Liang's hand and said: "The end is very near—I have something special to tell you."

"What command has Your Majesty to give?"

"You are ten times more clever than Cao Pi, and you will surely be able to safeguard the kingdom and complete the great work. If my son can be helped, help him. But if he proves an imbecile then take the throne yourself."

These words shocked Zhuge Liang. A cold sweat broke out throughout his body and his limbs became limp. He fell on his knees and said in tears, "How dare I not devote all my effort, even my life, to the service of your son? How will I ever forget my loyalty to you?"

He bowed his head upon the ground till it bled. Then the First Ruler asked Zhuge Liang to sit on his couch. Calling his two younger sons to come near, he said to them, "My sons, remember your father's words. After my death you three

brothers are to treat the prime minister as you would your father and never be remiss in your duties."

He made the two princes bow to Zhuge Liang as to a father.

Zhuge Liang said, "Were I to die I should not be able to repay the kindness I have received from Your Majesty."

Turning to the assembled officials, the First Ruler said, "As you have seen, I have confided my orphan sons to the care of the prime minister and ordered them to treat him as a father. You too, gentlemen, are to treat him with deference. This is my dying request to you."

Turning to Zhao Yun, he said, "You and I have gone through many dangers and difficulties together. Now comes the time of our parting. I hope you won't forget our old friendship and look after my sons."

"Dare I not give my most faithful service!" said Zhao Yun, weeping. Then he turned to the others: "Noble sirs, I am unable to speak to you one by one but I hope you will all maintain your self-respect."

These were the First Ruler's last words. He was sixty-three when he died on the twenty-fourth day of the fourth month of the third year of Zhang Wu (A.D. 223).

A poem was written by Du Fu in memory of him:

The king set out to destroy the land that lay through the gorges,
Failed he and breathed his last in the Palace of Eternal Peace,

The luxurious palace in his thoughts lay beyond the highlands.
Beautiful chambers are vainly sought in his rural temple,
Now the pines near his shrine are nesting places for herons,
Through the courts aged peasants saunter, enjoying their leisure,
Nearby often is found a shrine to this famous strategist,
Prince and minister alike enjoy offerings in season.

Thus died Liu Bei, the First Ruler. All present in the chamber wept in sorrow.

The prime minister led the procession that escorted the coffin to the capital, and the heir, Liu Shan, came to the outskirts of the city, as a dutiful son should, to receive the remains with due respect. The coffin was laid in the main hall of the palace, where after paying respects to the deceased ruler, the testament was opened and read.

"I first fell ill from a minor ailment. Other disorders followed, and it became evident that I could not recover. They say that death at fifty cannot be termed premature and as I have passed three score I cannot resent the call. Only I will miss you and your brothers. Now I say to you, do no evil because it is a small evil; do not leave undone a small good because it is a small good. Only with wisdom and virtue can men be won. Do not follow your father, for my virtue was but slender. After my death you are to conduct the affairs of the state with the prime minister. You are to treat him as a father and serve him without remiss. You and your brothers must strive to perfect yourselves. Always bear these words in mind and never forget!"

When this had been read, Zhuge Liang said, “The state cannot go a single day without a ruler, therefore I suggest we install the heir as successor to the great line of the Hans.”

So the necessary ceremony was performed and Liu Shan took his place as the Second Ruler of the Kingdom of Shu. The style of the reign was changed to Jian Xing. Zhuge Liang was given two extra titles, Marquis of Wuxiang and Governor of Yizhou.

Then they buried the late ruler at Hui Mausoleum with the posthumous title of Emperor Zhao Lie. The Empress, of the Wu family, was created Empress Dowager. The late consort Lady Gan became Empress Zhao-Lie and Lady Mi was also granted a posthumous rank of empress. There were promotions in rank and rewards for all, and a general amnesty was proclaimed.

Before long knowledge of all this came to the men of Wei and a report was sent to its capital. When he heard of the death of his rival, Cao Pi felt happy and relieved, and his thoughts at once turned toward an attack on Shu during this critical moment of the change of ruler.

But Jia Xu was against this. “Liu Bei is gone but he must have confided the care of the state to Zhuge Liang, who will exhaust every effort to support the heir out of gratitude for his father’s kindness to him. Your Majesty should not attack too hastily.”

As he tendered this remonstrance, a man suddenly stepped out from the serried ranks of courtiers and cried, “If you miss this moment, can you expect a more favorable opportunity?”

All eyes turned to the speaker—it was Sima Yi.

His words greatly pleased Cao Pi, who at once asked him for advice.

Sima Yi replied, “It will be difficult to obtain immediate success with just our own resources. Hence we must muster five armies and attack all at once, which will make it impossible for Zhuge Liang to cope.”

“Which five armies?” asked Cao Pi.

Sima Yi went on, “First, write to the king of East Liao and bribe him with expensive presents so that he will agree to send an army of the Qiang tribesmen to attack Xiping Pass by land. Secondly, send an envoy to the deep south to see the king of the Mans and confer certain official titles on him to persuade him to attack the southern four districts of Shu with another army. Thirdly, send an ambassador to Wu with promises of yielding them some territory, and so induce Sun Quan to attack the western gorges and capture Fucheng. The fourth army can be Meng Da’s men, who will attack Hanzhong. Lastly, our own force may be placed under Cao Zhen, who will attack by way of Yangping Pass. Each of the five armies will be composed of 100,000 men, making it altogether half a million. With all five forces attacking simultaneously along five different fronts, it will be virtually impossible for Zhuge Liang to hold his own, even if he has the talent of the ancient Lu Shang.”

The scheme delighted Cao Pi, who at once cast about for four clever-tongued messengers. He also issued a commission to Cao Zhen as commander-in-chief.

At this time Zhang Liao and many other veterans who had served Cao Cao were created marquises, guarding various crucial passes and fords in different parts of the kingdom. So they were not summoned for this expedition to the west.

Now let us turn to the Kingdom of Shu. After the accession of the Second Ruler, Liu Shan, many of those who had served his father died. The work of the administration of the kingdom, including the choice of officials, law-making, taxation, decision of legal cases, was all in the hands of Zhuge Liang.

As the new ruler had no consort, the courtiers, headed by Zhuge Liang, proposed that the seventeen-year-old daughter of his late uncle Zhang Fei was extremely virtuous, and suitable to be the empress. And so she was married to the Second Ruler and became his consort.

It was in the autumn of the year of his accession that he heard of the five armies of Wei advancing to attack his state. He was also told that the prime minister, who was informed earlier of the invasion, had mysteriously taken refuge in his residence and had not come out to attend to state affairs for several days running.

Alarmed, the new ruler sent one of his personal attendants to call the prime minister to court. The man was gone a long time and then returned to say that the servants there had told him the prime minister was ill and could not leave his house.

As his distress increased, the Second Ruler sent two high officials to see Zhuge Liang in his chamber and tell him the dreadful news of Wei's invasion. They went but they got no

farther than the gate, for they were refused admission by the gatekeepers. They had to ask the wardens to convey their message to the prime minister. After keeping them waiting a long time the wardens returned to say that the prime minister felt a bit better and would be at court the next morning.

The two messengers sighed deeply as they returned to the Second Ruler's palace.

The next morning a big crowd of officials assembled at the gate of the prime minister's residence to wait for him to appear. But he did not come out. It began to get late and they had to depart. One of them went in to see the Second Ruler and suggested that he should go and see the minister in person to ask him what should be done.

The Second Ruler then led the officials inside to see the Empress Dowager.

"What can this mean?" she said in great alarm. "This is not acting in the spirit of the charge laid upon him by the late emperor. Let me go and see him myself."

But one of the officials said that she should not condescend to go so soon. "I think the prime minister must have some excellent idea in mind," he added. "Let His Majesty go first and if he still shows negligence then Your Majesty can summon him to the Ancestral Temple and question him."

So it was left at that. And the next day the Second Ruler rode in his chariot to the gate of his chief minister. When the gatekeepers saw the imperial chariot arrive they fell upon their knees to pay their obeisance to the Emperor.

“Where is the prime minister?” he asked.

“We do not know. But we have orders not to let in the officials.”

The Second Ruler then descended and went on foot alone inside. When he came to the third gate he saw Zhuge Liang leaning on a bamboo staff beside a fishpond looking at the fish. He stood behind him for a long time. At last the Emperor said slowly, “Are you enjoying yourself, sir?”

Zhuge Liang started and looked round. When he saw who the speaker was he dropped his staff and bowed to the ground.

“I ought to be put to death 10,000 times,” he said.

The Second Ruler helped him to his feet and said, “Cao Pi threatens immediate invasion of our land with five armies. Why won’t you come out and attend to the matter?”

Zhuge Liang laughed. He conducted his lord into an inner room and, when they were seated, he said, “Could it be possible that I was ignorant of these five armies? I was not looking at the fish—I was thinking.”

“But what should we do?”

“I have already turned back four of the five armies—the northern Qiang tribesmen, the southern Mans, the rebel Meng Da, and the army from Wei. There is only Sun Quan’s army left but I have also thought out a plan to thwart them. All I need now is an able speaker to carry it out. I have not yet decided on whom to send, though. That was why I was so

deeply in thought just now. But Your Majesty can set his mind at rest."

The Second Ruler heard this with both joy and surprise. "Sir, your designs are indeed superhuman. But may I ask how these armies have been made to turn back?"

Zhuge Liang replied, "Since His Majesty your father bade me take the best care of your welfare, I dare not be remiss for a single moment. These officials here are ignorant of the fact that what makes war strategies work is secrecy. How can I let them know my plans?

"When I heard that the Qiang tribesmen would come to invade Xiping Pass, I remembered that Ma Chao's forefathers were friendly with them and they had a very high opinion of Ma Chao, regarding him as a general of supreme prestige. So I have sent a dispatch to Ma Chao, ordering him to hold the Pass and to prepare four ambushes in key places and change them around daily so as to keep the Qiangs away. That settled the army from the north.

"Next I sent a messenger to the south to order Wei Yan to deal with the force of the Mans. I told him to move a body of his men about—appearing from the left and disappearing from the right or vice versa—to confuse the Mans, who are brave soldiers, but prone to doubts and hesitations, and they will not advance in the face of the unknown. Hence there is nothing to fear in that quarter.

"As for the traitor Meng Da's army, I know that Meng Da and our Li Yan are sworn friends. When I returned from the city of Baidi I had left Li Yan in charge of the Palace of Eternal

Peace. I then forged a letter in the hand of Li Yan to Meng Da. I am sure he will feign illness and not move his army.

"Lastly, to repel the army of Wei I have ordered Zhao Yun to hold Yang-ping Pass, where the terrain is dangerous enough for good defense. If our men refuse to go forth, the enemy will certainly have to withdraw. So all those four armies are settled. But for greater security I have sent your cousins Zhang Bao and Guan Xing to camp at crucial points where they can quickly help any of the others who may need it. None of these deployments happened here in the capital so no one has any knowledge about them.

"Now there is only the army from Wu left to deal with. If the other four succeed and we are in danger, Sun Quan will attack. If the others fail he will not budge, for he will remember that Cao Pi has only recently sent three armies to attack his country. But even so, I want a man with a ready tongue and ingenious mind to go and explain matters of vital interest to Sun Quan. So far I have not found such a man, and I am pondering over this. I regret that I have given Your Majesty occasion to make this journey."

"The Empress Dowager also wanted to come," said the Second Ruler. "But now that you have explained everything so clearly to me, I feel like I have awakened from a dream. I have no more worries."

The two drank a few cups of wine together. Then the minister escorted his master to his chariot. A ring of courtiers were waiting, and they could not help noticing the happiness that shone in their lord's face. The Second Ruler took his leave and returned to his palace, but the courtiers were still puzzled.

Now Zhuge Liang had noted in the crowd one particular person, who turned up his head toward the sky and smiled. He recognized him to be Deng Zhi, a man of reputable ancestry. Zhuge Liang secretly told an attendant to detain Deng Zhi, and when all the others had gone, Zhuge Liang led him into his study for a talk. Presently he came to the matter in his heart.

"Now the three states of Shu, Wei, and Wu have become a fact," he said. "If one state wants to absorb the other two and reunite the empire, which state should it attack first?"

"Though Wei is the real rebel, yet it is strong and will be very difficult to overthrow. Any move against it will have to develop slowly. As our Emperor has but lately succeeded his father and the people are none too decided in his favor, I should propose a treaty of mutual defense with Wu. This will erase the enmity of our late Emperor and yield lasting results. I wonder if you, sir, approve of this."

"That is exactly what I have been pondering over these days, but I have not found the man for the task until now."

"What do you want him to do?" asked Deng Zhi.

"I want him to go as an envoy to Wu to negotiate such a treaty. As you understand the position so well you will surely do honor to your lord's commission. None but you can succeed."

"I fear I am not equal to such a task—I have little learning and inferior intelligence."

Zhuge Liang ignored his modesty and said, “I will inform the Emperor tomorrow and ask him to appoint you. Please don’t refuse.”

Deng Zhi consented and then took his leave. The next day the Second Ruler was told about this mission and consequently Deng Zhi started out for Wu.

Wu has just seen the din of war cease,
Shu’s envoy comes with presents for a league.

The result of the mission will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Both were generals of Xiang Yu but later surrendered to Liu Bang, founder of Han.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SIX

Qin Mi Engages Zhang Wen in a Philosophical Debate

Xu Sheng Uses Fire to Destroy Cao Pi's Army

After his recent victory over Wei, Lu Xun became the leading hero of Wu. He was given the titles of General–Pillar of the State, Marquis of Jiangling, and Governor of Jingzhou. He was also given command of all the military forces.

Zhang Zhao and Gu Yong, who thought the moment opportune for enhancing their lord's dignity, sent in a memorial proposing that he assume a distinctive reign title.* Sun Quan agreed and adopted Huang Wu as his reign title.

Then a messenger arrived from Wei. He was duly received by Sun Quan, who asked him to state his business. The messenger said, "Recently Shu turned to us for help and due to a misunderstanding of the situation, we dispatched three forces to aid Shu against you. Now our lord deeply regrets this action and he desires to set four armies in motion against Shu to wipe that kingdom out. He earnestly hopes that you will assist us. If successful, Wei and Wu will share the conquered territory."

Unable to decide what to do Sun Quan turned to his chief counselors, who suggested that Lu Xun should be consulted. So he was called to offer his superior view on this.

Lu Xun said, “Cao Pi is too firmly established in the capital to be toppled now, and if we refuse this request of his we will provoke his enmity. However, neither Wei nor Wu, so far as I see, has any man capable of opposing Zhuge Liang. We can pretend consent and prepare our army, but make no move till we see how the war goes with the other four armies. If Shu seems likely to fall and Zhuge Liang is outmaneuvered, then our army can be dispatched to capture their capital Chengdu. If the four armies fail we will reconsider our policy.”

Sun Quan was pleased with this advice, so he said to the envoy of Wei, “We are not ready at the moment but we will choose a day to start later.”

And with this answer the envoy left. After he was gone Sun Quan sent out scouts to find out how things went with the other four armies against Shu. They returned with the news that the Qiang tribesmen had turned back when they saw Ma Chao in command at Xiping Pass. The Mans of the deep south had been perplexed by the tactics of Wei Yan and had marched back to their own land. The Shangyong army led by Meng Da had set out, but he had suddenly fallen ill halfway and also withdrawn. And Cao Zhen’s army had been brought to a halt by the defensive strategy of Zhao Yun, who had garrisoned every vantage point. This force had eventually withdrawn after waiting in vain at Ye Valley.”

Hearing all this, Sun Quan said to his officials, “How accurate Lu Xun’s prediction was! If I’d took any rash action I would have made myself an enemy of Shu again.”

Just then it was announced an envoy had come from Shu.

Zhang Zhao said, “This is also part of Zhuge Liang’s scheme to divert danger from Shu. He must have come with the intention of talking you round.”

“How should I reply, then?” asked Sun Quan.

“Well, you can set up a large caldron filled with several hundred catties of oil. Light a fire beneath. When the oil boils, choose a goodly company of tall and sturdy soldiers armed with swords to line up along the entrance from the palace gate to this hall. Then summon the envoy, but before he can say a word upbraid him for trying to imitate Li Shi-ji of old, and say he will suffer the same punishment—that is, dying in boiling oil. See what he replies.”

Sun Quan followed this advice and prepared the caldron of boiling oil and placed the armed guards all along the entrance. Then he summoned the envoy.

Deng Zhi tidied his robe and advanced to the palace gate. Seeing the grim array of fighting men armed with gleaming swords, great axes, and long spears, he understood at once what was meant, but he never faltered. He proceeded steadily and bravely to the hall, where he also saw the caldron of boiling oil and the hostile eyes of savage executioners. In the face of this gruesome display of terror Deng Zhi only smiled.

He was led before a curtain, behind which sat the prince. Deng Zhi bowed but did not kneel down to pay his obeisance.

The prince, after ordering his attendants to roll up the curtain, said sternly, “Why did you not kneel down?”

Deng Zhi boldly replied, “The envoy of a superior state does not kneel down before the ruler of a smaller country.”

Provoked to anger, Sun Quan cried, “Are you trying to imitate Li Shi-ji and wag your tongue? You will soon find yourself in that caldron of oil.”

Deng Zhi laughed aloud. “People say there are many wise men in Wu. Who would have believed that they would be frightened of a mere scholar?”

This reply only increased Sun Quan’s anger. “Who says I am afraid of a simpleton like you?”

“If you are not afraid of me, why are you so worried about what I may say to you?”

“I know what you want to say. Zhuge Liang has sent you to try to persuade me to sever relations with Wei and combine with your country. Is that right?”

“I am but a scholar of Shu and I have come to explain matters of vital interest to your country. But to intimidate me you have prepared armed men and a caldron of boiling oil. How narrow-minded you are that you will not even tolerate an envoy?”

Sun Quan was embarrassed at his own behavior. He sent away the soldiers and called the envoy to ascend the hall. There he invited him to sit and said, “Please instruct me about the crucial issues between Wu and Wei.”

Deng Zhi replied, “Sir, do you desire to seek peace with Wei or with Shu?”

“I really desire to seek peace with the lord of Shu. But he is young and inexperienced and I am afraid he will be unable to carry such an alliance through.”

“Sir, you are a valiant ruler, just as Zhuge Liang is a great minister. Now Shu has the advantage of its precipitous mountains and streams, just as Wu has the protection of its three rivers. If our two countries are at peace we are mutually protective. If things go well, we may swallow between us the rest of the empire; if not, we are still able to maintain the present situation of a three-way standoff. If you yield to Wei and acknowledge yourself one of its ministers, you will be expected to attend at his court from time to time, and your heir-apparent will be reduced to an attendant in that court; and if you disobey, an army will be sent to punish you. If that happens, Shu also will seize the opportunity to come down the river and invade your country. Then this land will no longer be yours. If you find my words unworthy to consider, I will die here in your presence and so terminate the post I have as an envoy.”

As he spoke these last words he gathered up his robe and strode down the hall as though he was going to jump into the caldron.

“Stop him!” cried Sun Quan, and the attendants did so. Then he requested Deng Zhi to go into an inner hall, where he treated the envoy as a guest of the highest honor.

Sun Quan said, “You have spoken my thoughts, and I desire to make a league of peace with your state. Are you willing to be the intermediary?”

“Just now it was you, sir, who wished to boil my poor self—now it is also you who wish to employ me to mediate peace. You are still hesitating. How can I have faith in you?”

“My mind is made up,” replied Sun Quan. “Have no more doubts, sir.”

So he kept Deng Zhi as his guest. In the meantime, he gathered together his officials and addressed the assembly: “Under my hand are all the four score and one districts of the south and I have the land of Jing zhou to boot; yet I am not so well off as that remote country of Shu, for Shu has Deng Zhi as an envoy to glorify his lord’s mission. I have no one to send to declare my intentions to Shu.”

At his words a man stepped forth and volunteered to go. He was Zhang Wen.

“Sir, I fear that when you see Zhuge Liang in Shu you will not explain my real sentiments,” said Sun Quan dubiously.

Zhang Wen replied, “He is also human. Why should I be afraid of him?”

Pleased with his reply, Sun Quan rewarded Zhang Wen handsomely and sent him with Deng Zhi to Shu to negotiate the peace agreement.

While Deng Zhi was absent, Zhuge Liang said to his lord, "This mission to Wu will succeed, and of the many wise men in Wu, one will come as a returned envoy. Your Majesty should treat him with courtesy so that he will go back to Wu to complete the league of peace. If we have an alliance with Wu, Wei will not dare to send an army upon us. And if we are safe from both Wu and Wei, I will lead an expedition to subdue the Mans in the deep south. After that we can deal with Wei. If Wei is reduced, Wu will not last long, and the whole empire will again be under one ruler."

It was presently reported that Deng Zhi had returned, together with Zhang Wen. The Second Ruler and his court assembled to receive them. The envoy of Wu carried himself as one who had attained his desires and advanced proudly. Having made his salute, he was asked to sit on a brocaded stool on the left side of the Second Ruler. A banquet followed, at which Zhang Wen was treated with appropriate honor. At the end of the banquet the whole court escorted the envoy to the guesthouse where he was to lodge.

On the second day he was entertained by Zhuge Liang, who broached the real business at the feast: "Our late ruler was not on friendly terms with Wu but he is no more. Our present Emperor admires your prince and is prepared to forget the former enmity and swear eternal friendship with your country to the complete destruction of Wei. I look to you, sir, to speak in favor of this league."

Zhang Wen agreed. Then wine went merrily around and, as the envoy became mellow, he began to feel very much at home, laughing and swaggering in a conceited manner.

The next day, as his mission ended, Zhang Wen was given rich presents of gold and valuables and a parting banquet was administered in a guest chamber on the southern outskirts of the city, at which all the court assembled to see him off. The prime minister paid him assiduous attention and urged him to drink. While this banquet was in progress, there suddenly came in a man, who seemed to be already quite drunk. This person made a proud sort of salutation to the assembly and at once took a seat. His conduct seemed strange to Zhang Wen, who asked his host about the newcomer.

"He is Qin Mi, a scribe from Yizhou," replied Zhuge Liang.

"He may be that," said Zhang Wen with a laugh, "but I wonder if he has any learning at all inside him."

Qin Mi said seriously, "Even our children are all learned, let alone myself."

"What is your special learning, sir?" asked Zhang Wen.

"Everything—from astronomy to geography, from the three religious teachings* to the nine schools of philosophy, as well as all books on history and the saints. There is nothing I have not read."

"Since you talk so big," said Zhang Wen, "I should like to ask you a few questions on celestial matters. Now does the sky have a head?"

“Yes, it does.”

“Where is it?”

“In the west. As the Odes say, ‘God turned his head kindly toward the west,’ so from this we can infer that his head is in the west.’’

“Well, does the sky have ears?”

“Oh yes. The sky is above and listens to all things below. The Odes say, ‘The crane calls from the midst of the marsh and his cry is heard by the sky.’ How could the sky hear without ears?”

“Does the sky have feet?”

“Sure it does. To quote the Odes again: ‘Heaven walks strenuously.’ If there were no feet how could it walk?”

“Does it have a name?”

“Why not?”

“Then what is it?”

“Liu.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because the Emperor’s family name is Liu, and he is the Son of Heaven. That is how I know.”

"Does the sun spring from the east?"

"Though it does so, yet it sets in the west."

All this time Qin Mi's repartees had flashed back clear and quick. All those present were amazed. Zhang Wen had nothing to say. Then it became Qin Mi's turn to question his rival.

"You are a famous scholar in your land, sir, and since you have asked so many questions about the sky I take it that you are well versed in all celestial matters. When original chaos resolved into its two elements, yin and yang, the lighter portion, or ether, rose and became the sky, and the grosser sank and solidified into the earth. When Gong Gong's* rebellion was crushed, he struck his head against the Buzhou Mountains, breaking one of the supporting props of Heaven and damaging a portion of the earth. Consequently Heaven leaned over toward the northwest and earth sank to the southeast. But, since Heaven was ethereal and had floated to the top, how could it lean over toward the northwest? Another thing I do not know is what lies beyond the ether. I should be glad if you would explain these to me, sir."

Zhang Wen was entirely at a loss how to reply. He rose from his place and bowed to his rival, saying, "I did not expect to find so many talents in this land. Your discourse has enlightened me tremendously and I can see clearly all of a sudden."

But Zhuge Liang, fearing lest the guest should feel mortified, soothed him with fair words. "This is all but a play on words, the sort of game one encourages at a merry feast. You,

honored sir, know how to bring peace and safety to a state. What will you care for these games of words?"

The envoy bowed. Then Deng Zhi was ordered to accompany the envoy back to Wu for courtesy's sake. So both took leave of the prime minister and set out on their journey to the east.

In the meantime, Sun Quan was getting uneasy at the delay of his envoy. He was holding a council to discuss this question when a report came that Zhang Wen had returned with Deng Zhi. They were immediately called in and Zhang Wen, having made his obeisance, spoke of the virtue of the new emperor of Shu and Zhuge Liang and their desire for a league of peace.

Turning to Deng Zhi, Sun Quan said, "Would it not be perfect if tranquillity should be restored to the empire by the destruction of Wei through our joint efforts, and Wu and Shu should share its administration?"

"The sky does not have two suns," replied Deng Zhi, "nor can the people recognize two kings. If Wei is destroyed, no one can predict upon whom the divine command will devolve. All I know is that a ruler must perfect his virtue while officials must be wholly loyal. In this way strife will cease."

Sun Quan laughed and said, "So you are as honest as that!"

Deng Zhi was given rich gifts and allowed to return. After this Wu and Shu were friendly again.

The alliance between his two rivals was reported without loss of time to Cao Pi, who became very angry. "This alliance can

only mean that they intend to invade my country. My best move is to strike first."

He called a great council. At that time two influential figures, Cao Ren and Jia Xu, had both died. An official called Xin Pi stepped forward and said, "Our country is extensive but the population is sparse. Hence, no successful army can be raised just now. My advice is to wait for ten years, during which time we build an army and cultivate the land till we have an ample store of grain and a powerful military force. Then both our rivals can be destroyed."

"This is the view of a pedant! Now that our enemies have made this league they may fall upon us at any moment. How can it be postponed for ten years?" cried Cao Pi furiously.

So he gave orders for an immediate expedition to attack Wu. Sima Yi then pointed out that ships were necessary as Wu was protected by the Yangtze.

"Your Majesty must lead the expedition," said Sima Yi. "The navy can advance by way of the Cai and Yun Waters to take Shouchun first. And when you reach Guangling, cross the river to seize Nanxu."

His plan was accepted and the construction of dragon ships began. Ten of these were built, each two hundred feet long to accommodate more than 2,000 men. Another 3,000 fighting ships were also gathered for the military action.

In the autumn of the fifth year of Cao Pi's rule, the officers were all assembled and Cao Zhen was appointed leader of the first corps with four major generals, including Zhang Liao

and Zhang He. Xu Zhu and another officer were guards of the center, while Cao Xiu commanded the rearguard. Two strategists were also appointed to accompany the army. In all, land and marine forces numbered over 300,000. When the departure day was decided upon, Sima Yi was left in the capital with the power of a regent.

While the Wei army set forth, spies of Wu were vigilant and soon Sun Quan was alerted of the grave danger.

A general council was again convened, at which Gu Yong said: "My lord, you can ask Shu to help according to the peace agreement. Write to Zhuge Liang and get him to send a troop so as to divert part of Wei's army. At the same time dispatch an army to Nanxu to oppose the invaders there."

"I will have to recall Lu Xun," said the prince. "He is the only man to undertake this great task."

"But he is necessary for the protection of Jingzhou."

"Yes, I know—but there is no other person to replace him."

At these words Xu Sheng advanced and said, "Incapable as I am, I would like to be given an army to avert this danger. If Cao Pi crosses the river in person I will capture him and present him to you. If he does not, I will slay so many of his men that his army will not dare even to look this way."

Sun Quan, pleased to find a willing volunteer, replied, "Noble sir, I will have no more anxiety with you in charge of defense."

Xu Sheng was given the title of General–Protector of the East and made commander-in-chief of all the forces in Nanxu. He thanked his lord and retired to the camp, where he ordered his men to gather large quantities of weapons and banners for the protection of the riverbanks.

But an impetuous young officer, anxious to take more vigorous measures, stood forth, crying, "Sir, our lord has laid upon you a heavy responsibility, but if you really desire to capture the ruler of Wei you should cross the river and meet him in Huainan rather than wait till the northern men come here. It will be too late, I fear."

The young man was Sun Shao, nephew of the Prince of Wu. He had already earned himself the rank of a general, and was once in command at Guangling. Young and impetuous, he was a valiant soldier.

"Cao Pi's army is strong and its generals famous," replied Xu Sheng. "I don't think we should cross the river to meet him. We will wait until all his ships are on the other side—I have a plan ready to destroy them."

"I have 3,000 men of my own and I know the country about Guangling up to my fingertips. Let me go across the river and fight a battle. I will willingly suffer the penalty if I fail."

However, Xu Sheng refused, but his impetuous officer pleaded again and again. Finally, the commander-in-chief grew angry and said, "What control will I have if you are allowed to disobey orders?" He told the guards to take him out and put him to death.

They hustled him out and at once the black flag of death was hoisted. But one of Sun Shao's men went off in hot haste to tell Sun Quan, who came immediately to save his favorite nephew.

Happily the execution had not been exercised when the prince appeared on the scene, dismissed the executioners, and rescued the youth. Tearfully he began to press his claim to the prince. "I have been at Guang ling and I know the region like the palm of my hand. If we do not attack Cao Pi there, but let him cross the river, that will be the end of Wu."

Sun Quan walked into the camp and Xu Sheng came to welcome him. When the prince was seated, Xu Sheng said: "My lord, you placed me in command of the force to repulse Wei. Now this officer of mine, Sun Shao, is disobedient and should be put to death. May I ask why he should be pardoned?"

"He is hot and impetuous so he has unwittingly offended the military law. I do hope you will pardon him this time."

"The law is not of my making nor is it yours, my lord—it is a state penalty. If family connections are enough to evade it, where is discipline?"

"He has offended the law and you certainly have the right to punish him. But although his real name was Yu, yet my brother loved him and gave him our family name. He has rendered me good services, and if he should be put to death I should fail in my duty to my late brother."

“Well, since you have intervened, I will postpone the death penalty for the time being.”

Sun Quan told his nephew to thank his chief, but the youth refused to bow. On the contrary, he loudly protested, “I insist we should lead our men to fight Cao Pi,” he cried. “I will never accept your view, not even at my death.”

Xu Sheng’s countenance changed for the worst.

Sun Quan, after ordering the unruly young man to leave the tent, said to the commander, “He will not be any loss to the army. Just do not employ him any more.”

Then the prince left and returned to his own palace. That night sentinels reported to Xu Sheng that Sun Shao had secretly crossed the river with his own force, and the commander, who did not wish the young man to come to harm, as evidently that would displease the prince, sent a force to support him. Ding Feng was chosen to lead the reinforcements and was told what to do.

The Ruler of Wei, in his dragon ships, reached Guangling, where his vanguard corps had already encamped by the riverbank. He came to survey the position.

“How many soldiers are there on the other bank?” asked Cao Pi.

Cao Zhen replied, “I have not seen a single one—nor are there any flags or signs of encampment.”

“That must be a ruse—I will go and find out.”

So he sailed out in one of the dragon ships into the Yangtze. The ship anchored by the bank. Displayed on his ship were emblems proper to an imperial status, which shone out brilliantly in the sunlight. Seated in the ship, Cao Pi surveyed the south bank, but not a man was visible.

"Do you think we should cross?" he asked of his strategists.

"The rules of war allow for deceits and falsities. Knowing the approach of our army they ought to be prepared. We think Your Majesty should exercise caution. Wait for a few days and watch what happens. Then perhaps the van might be sent to make a reconnaissance."

"Exactly," said Cao Pi.

That night he stayed on his ship in the river. It was a moonless night. But the ship was brilliantly lit up by torches so it was bright as day on board. However, all along the south bank there appeared not a glimmer of light.

"What do you think it means?" asked Cao Pi.

The courtiers replied, "Obviously they must have heard of the approach of Your Majesty's heavenly army and so have run away like rats."

Cao Pi smiled smugly to himself. When daylight came there appeared a thick fog, and nothing on the opposite bank could be seen. After a time the wind rose, which dispersed the fog and blew off the clouds, and then, to their immense astonishment, they found that the whole length of the south bank as far as they could see was one extended battlement,

with spears and swords glittering in the sun and flags and pennants fluttering in the breeze. Almost immediately scouts began sending in reports that from Nanxu to the Stone City (modern Nanjing), stretching hundreds of li, was an unending line of wall towers, boats, and carriages, which had been placed there overnight. Cao Pi was greatly alarmed.

In fact this was a ruse of Xu Sheng's. The walls were imitation and the warriors that manned them were bundles of reeds dressed in soldiers' uniforms. But the sight chilled the courage of the invaders.

"My multitudes of men are of no use against such warriors of the south," sighed Cao Pi. "Wu is not to be conquered yet."

Just as he was lamenting over this, the wind gathered force and surging white waves began to heave in the river, sending seas high up into the air and dampening his dragon robe. The ship lurched helplessly as if she would roll right over. Cao Zhen hastened to send Wen Ping out with some small boats to rescue his master. Now the lurches of the ship were appalling and the men on it could hardly maintain their balance. Therefore Wen Ping, who was a good swimmer, leaped on board the ship and helped Cao Pi down into one of the smaller craft, which then flew away before the wind and got safely into a bay.

Soon came a hasty messenger from the west to say that Zhao Yun had marched out of Yangping Pass to seize Chang'an. This frightened Cao Pi so much that he decided to withdraw. The various divisions of the army turned back to run their separate ways to the north, pursued by the men of Wu. To hasten the retreat, Cao Pi ordered his men to abandon all the

imperial paraphernalia. However, as the dragon ships were about to withdraw into the Huai River, there suddenly arose the sounds of an approaching enemy force, with shouts of men, rolling of drums and the blaring of trumpets, and a troop came upon them from the side. At the head was the impetuous youth Sun Shao.

The men of Wei could make no effective stand and many were slain, while large numbers were driven into the river and drowned. By dint of the great efforts of his officers, Cao Pi was saved and got away up the Huai River. But when they had sailed about thirty li, they saw ahead some blazing reeds. The enemy had poured fish oil over the dry reeds and set them alight. The wind was spreading the flames downstream toward the men of Wei, and the heat was intense. The dragon ships had to stop.

Cao Pi was at once helped into a small boat and taken on shore; his larger ships soon caught fire and were destroyed. Hurriedly he mounted a horse and dashed down the bank, but presently another body of men blocked the way. This time it was the supporting force under Ding Feng.

Zhang Liao rode ahead to engage Ding Feng, who shot an arrow and wounded his opponent in the loins. However, the wounded man was rescued by Xu Huang. In the end the ruler of Wei escaped the turmoil but the loss of men was heavy, and a huge booty of horses, wagons, ships, and weapons fell to the victors.

So the Wei army retreated northward, thoroughly beaten. Xu Sheng scored a great success, for which he was richly rewarded.

Zhang Liao got to Xuchang, where he died from his wounds. He was honorably buried by his master, but the story of his funeral will not be told here.

It has been mentioned above that Zhao Yun had led an army out of Yangping Pass to take Chang'an. But soon after that he received a dispatch from Zhuge Liang, calling him to return, because an aged general in Yizhou, named Yong Kai, had joined himself with the Mans and invaded four of the Shu districts. So Zhao Yun was recalled and Ma Chao was put in charge of the Yangping Pass. Zhuge Liang then prepared an army at Chengdu for an expedition to pacify the southern border.

First Wu met Wei and drove them north,
Then Shu against the Mans went forth.

The result of this expedition will be related in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* In ancient China, it was the practice of a new ruler to adopt a new reign title. Here it means Sun Quan was establishing himself as an independent ruler.

* Referring to Buddhism, Confuciunism, and Taoism.

* A mythical figure with the face of a human and the body of a snake.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-SEVEN

Zhuge Liang Raises an Army to Subdue the Mans

The King of the Mans Initially Suffers Defeat

As Prime Minister Zhuge Liang was in full charge of the administration of the government, personally looking into every matter, big or small, and making fair and just decisions, there began a period of happiness and prosperity for the people of Shu. Peace prevailed and the society was well nigh perfect, doors unbolted at night, property left by the roadside remaining untouched till the owner returned for it. Moreover, rich harvests followed year after year. The people, old and young, with fair round bellies, well lined, simply sang with joy. They hastened to fulfill their state duties and vied with each other in the performance of any edicts issued by the government. Consequently conditions for military actions were most favorable: all military equipment was ready for use, every granary bursting with grain, and the treasury full to overflowing.

Such was the state of things when news came to the capital that Meng Huo, King of the Mans, had raised a large army to invade and plunder the southern borders and that Yong Kai, Prefect of Jianning and a descendant of a marquis of Han, had collaborated with him. Already two districts had yielded to the invaders, but a third was staunchly holding out. The three

rebel prefects, who had joined the invaders, were now acting as guides and assisting them in the attack on Yongchang, whose prefect, Wang Kang, was making a desperate effort to defend the city. The situation was very grave.

After hearing this, Zhuge Liang went into the palace to see his young lord to whom he said, "The rebellion of the Mans is a real threat to our state. I must lead an expedition to bring the barbarians to obedience."

But the Second Ruler said, "There are Wu to the east* and Wei in the north. If you leave me here and either kingdom attacks, what should I do?"

"Your Majesty need have no fear. We have just entered into a league of peace with Wu, and I think they will be true to their pledge. Even if they are not, Li Yan is there at the city of Baidi. He is quite a match for Lu Xun. As for Cao Pi, his recent defeat has taken the keenness out of his men and I do not think he is able to make an expedition at the moment. Besides, Ma Chao is in command of the defense of all the passes between Wei and Hanzhong. I have also left your two cousins with forces to reinforce any point where danger may appear. I can assure Your Majesty that nothing will go wrong. I am going to subdue the Mans' country so that we may have a free hand to conquer Wei when the day comes. Only thus will I be able to return the kindness bestowed upon me by your father, who came thrice to my cottage to seek my service and who doubled my obligation when he entrusted to me the care of Your Majesty."

"I am young and ignorant," said the Second Ruler, "and I rely on you to decide for me."

At that moment an official, Wang Lian by name, stepped forward and voiced his objection. “No, no, sir, you must not go. The south is an uncultivated country reeking with malaria. As prime minister you have the heaviest responsibilities of the state and therefore it is not proper for you to leave on a distant expedition. These rebels and barbarians are but a minor irritation, not a fatal disease—another general should be enough to subdue them.”

Zhuge Liang replied, “This country of the Mans is far from the capital and the people there are mostly unruly. To bring them to submission will be difficult and I deem it my duty to go. When to be harsh and when to show leniency are matters that require subtle decisions, and I cannot trust these to another.”

Wang Lian attempted again to dissuade him but Zhuge Liang steadily refused to listen to his words. He took leave of his young lord and made ready to start. He took with him several civil officials and dozens of officers. Zhao Yun and Wei Yan were made commanding generals, while Wang Ping and Zhang Yi were second-in-command to each. The whole force, numbering 500,000 in all, started toward Yizhou.

One day, Zhuge Liang had an unexpected visitor in his camp. It was Guan Suo, third son of General Guan Yu. It so happened that after the fall of Jingzhou this youth had fled to a village, where he had been nursing his wounds. He had wanted to go to Chengdu to see his uncle, the First Ruler, to avenge his father but was prevented from doing so because of his severe wounds, which had only just healed. Having learned that vengeance had been taken on the enemies of his father, he left the village for the capital to see the new ruler.

He was traveling toward Chengdu when he fell in with Zhuge Liang's army. He asked to take part in this expedition.

Zhuge Liang heard his story with sadness and surprise. He accepted the young man and appointed him van leader of the expedition, while news of his arrival was dispatched to the capital.

The army marched in the best of order, eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty, camping at night and moving by day. No plundering was permitted and the life of the local people was undisturbed.

When Yong Kai and his fellow rebels heard that the prime minister himself was leading an army to suppress them, they decided to meet their enemy in three divisions—Gao Ding in the center, Yong Kai and Zhu Bao on the two wings, each with about 50,000 men. Gao Ding sent his officer, Er Huan, to lead the van. Tall of stature but ugly and vicious-looking, this Er Huan was a valiant fighter and his weapon was a halberd. He led his own men out ahead of the main body.

By then Zhuge Liang's army had already arrived at the boundary of Yizhou. The leading elements of the army led by Wei Yan encountered Er Huan and his men immediately after they entered Yizhou. The two sides drew up for battle and Wei Yan rode out and vilified the rebels, calling upon them to surrender. In retaliation, Er Huan galloped out to fight with him. After a few bouts Wei Yan faked defeat and fled. Er Huan pursued. Soon, however, he fell into an ambush and was captured.

He was taken to the tent of Zhuge Liang, who told his attendants to loosen his bonds and treat him with wine and food. Then he asked him who he was.

Er Huan replied, “I am one of the officers under Gao Ding.”

“I know Gao Ding is a loyal and good man but he has been deceived by Yong Kai. Now I am going to release you. I want you to go back and tell Gao Ding to surrender soon to avoid disaster.”

Er Huan thanked him and returned to his own side. He told Gao Ding what Zhuge Liang had said and praised him for his kindness. Gao Ding, too, was deeply grateful for Zhuge Liang’s kindly act.

The next day Yong Kai came over to Gao Ding’s camp to inquire how Er Huan could have been released.

“Zhuge Liang released him out of pure kindness,” replied Gao Ding.

“This is a ruse of his to sow dissension between you and I and make us enemies.”

Gao Ding, half-convinced, could not decide what to do next.

Just then scouts reported that some officers of Shu were offering battle outside. Yong Kai led out his men to take up the challenge. But after a short encounter he fled. Wei Yan pursued him and harried him for a distance of about twenty li.

The next day Yong Kai challenged but the men of Shu refused to fight, and remained within their lines for three days. On the fourth day Yong Kai and Gao Ding went to attack the Shu camp from two sides. Now Zhuge Liang had told Wei Yan to wait for this combined attack—so when the two rebel leaders sallied forth, both of them fell into an ambush and suffered heavily, losing many men killed and captured.

The prisoners were taken to the camp and Gao Ding's men were confined separately from those of Yong Kai's. Then Zhuge Liang told his soldiers to spread a rumor among the captured that only Gao Ding's men would be spared and the others would be put to death. When time had been given for this story to be circulated among all the prisoners, Yong Kai's men were brought before Zhuge Liang.

"Whose men are you?" he asked.

"Gao Ding's," they cried falsely.

Then they were all pardoned and, after being given wine and food, they were taken out of the camp and set free.

Next Gao Ding's actual troops were brought forward and the same question was put to them.

"We are really under Gao Ding's command," they answered.

In like manner they were pardoned and treated with wine and food. Then Zhuge Liang said to them, "Yong Kai has just sent a messenger to offer submission and he promises to bring with him the heads of your commander and of Zhu Bao as a

proof of his sincerity. But I feel sorry for your commander. Since you are his men I will release you and allow you to return to him. Let there be no rebellion again—for if there is, I certainly will not pardon you next time."

They thanked him and left. When they reached their own camp they told Gao Ding the whole story. Then Gao Ding secretly sent a spy to the camp of his colleague to find out how things really stood. There the secret agent found that the men who had been released were all talking about Zhuge Liang's kindness and many of their fellow men were inclined to desert to Gao Ding.

Although this seemed good fortune to Gao Ding, yet he did not feel convinced. So he sent another man to Zhuge Liang's camp to try to verify what he had learned so far. But this man was captured and taken before Zhuge Liang, who pretended that he mistook the spy to be Yong Kai's man and said to him, "Why has your commander failed to send me the heads of Gao Ding and Zhu Bao as he promised? You are so stupid. How can you be a spy?"

The spy mumbled something incoherently as a sort of reply. However, Zhuge Liang did not seem to mind but gave him wine and food, and then wrote a letter, which he handed to the spy, saying, "Take this letter to your commander, Yong Kai, and tell him to get the job done quickly."

The spy took the letter and swiftly departed. As soon as he reached his own camp he handed the letter to Gao Ding and told him what Zhuge Liang had said. Gao Ding read the letter and became very angry.

“This is intolerable!” cried Gao Ding. “I have always been true to him, yet he wants to kill me.”

Then he called Er Huan in to discuss the matter. Er Huan, who was much in favor of Zhuge Liang, said, “Zhuge Liang is a most benevolent man and we are wrong to rebel against him. It is Yong Kai’s fault that we are now rebels. We had better slay him and give ourselves up to Zhuge Liang.”

“How can this be done?” asked Gao Ding.

“Let us invite him to a banquet. If he comes it means he has no ill intention, but if he refuses it means he is a traitor. Then you can attack him in front while I will lie in wait behind his camp to capture him when he tries to run away.”

Gao Ding agreed to try this plan. The banquet was prepared and Yong Kai invited. But as his mind was full of suspicion after hearing what his returned soldiers had said, Yong Kai was afraid to go. So that night Gao Ding attacked his camp as planned.

Now those of Yong Kai’s men who had been released by Zhuge Liang were convinced of the goodness of Gao Ding and quite ready to help him fight. So they mutinied against their commander and confusion arose within his army. Yong Kai mounted his steed and fled. Before he had gone far he found his road blocked by the troops under Er Huan, who galloped out with his halberd and confronted the fugitive. Yong Kai could not defend himself and was struck down. Er Huan decapitated him. All his men surrendered to Gao Ding, who then led the combined forces to submit to Zhuge Liang.

Seated in state in his tent, Zhuge Liang received him but at once ordered him to be put to death.

Gao Ding cried, “I was grateful for your kindness, sir, so I have brought the head of Yong Kai as a proof of the sincerity of my surrender. Why do you want to kill me?”

“Your surrender is false—do you think you can hoodwink me?” said Zhuge Liang, laughing.

“What proof do you have against me?”

Zhuge Liang drew a letter from his box and said, “Zhu Bao sent this secret letter to say he wished to surrender, and he said you and Yong Kai were such intimate friends that you were ready to die for each other. How could you suddenly change your feelings and slay him? That is how I know of your treachery.”

“This is only Zhu Bao’s trick to stir up trouble,” cried Gao Ding, feeling greatly wronged.

Zhuge Liang, still pretending not to believe him, said, “I cannot take your side of the story only. If you slay Zhu Bao I will take that as a proof of your sincerity.”

“Do not suspect me,” replied Gao Ding. “I will go and capture him.”

“If you do that my doubts will be laid to rest.”

Therefore Gao Ding and his subordinate, Er Huan, led away their men to the camp of Zhu Bao. When they were about ten

li from the camp, Zhu Bao appeared with his men. As soon as they recognized each other, Zhu Bao hastily came forward to speak to his comrade. But Gao Ding cried out to him, “Why did you write a letter to the prime minister and so conspire to get me killed?”

Entirely unprepared for such an accusation, Zhu Bao stared open-mouthed and could not reply. Suddenly Er Huan rode out from behind his chief and struck Zhu Bao with his halberd. He fell dead to the ground. At this Gao Ding shouted to his men that they should either yield or be slain, and they yielded in a body.

Gao Ding then went back to Zhuge Liang and offered the head of the slain man. Zhuge Liang laughed again. “I have made you kill both these men so that you can prove your loyalty.”

Then he created Gao Ding Prefect of Yizhou, in charge of the three districts, and Er Huan his chief officer. Thus the three rebellious forces were subdued and the danger to Yongchang lifted.

The prefect then came out of the city to welcome Zhuge Liang inside. When he had entered that city Zhuge Liang asked the prefect who had aided him in the defense.

The prefect said, “The safety of this city is due entirely to Lu Kai.”

So Lu Kai was called. He came and paid his respects to the prime minister.

Zhuge Liang said, “Long have I heard of you as a remarkable man of this district. I am greatly indebted to you for its security. Now I wish to conquer the Mans—have you any advice to offer?”

Lu Kai then produced a map of the country and said, “From the time of my appointment here I have felt certain that the Mans would rise in rebellion, and so I secretly sent people to map their country and locate the strategic points. From that information I prepared this map, which I call ‘An In-depth Map to Conquer the Mans.’ I would like to present it to you, sir.”

Greatly pleased, Zhuge Liang took Lu Kai into his service as advisor and guide. With his help the army advanced and penetrated deeply into the southern country.

While the army was progressing, there came a messenger from the capital. When he appeared, Zhuge Liang saw it was Ma Su, dressed in white. He was in mourning for his brother, Ma Liang, who had just died. He had come by special order of the Second Ruler to deliver gifts of wine and silk to the army. When the gifts were distributed as instructed, Ma Su was asked to remain to talk over matters.

Zhuge Liang said, “I have His Majesty’s orders to conquer these Mans. I hear you are a man of superior views and I should be pleased if you would instruct me.”

Ma Shu replied, “I have one thing to say that may be worth your consideration. The Mans refuse to recognize our supremacy because they think their country is distant and difficult. If you overcome them today, they will revolt again

tomorrow. When your army moves in they will undoubtedly be subdued, but the day you withdraw the army to attack Cao Pi they will resume their rebellion. The best policy in warfare is to win hearts rather than cities—to fight with sentiments rather than to fight with weapons. It will be well if you can win their hearts over."

"Indeed, you have read my inmost thoughts!" said Zhuge Liang with a sigh of admiration.

Ma Su was kept with the army as advisor, and the army marched on.

When the king of the Mans, Meng Huo, heard how cleverly Zhuge Liang had got rid of Yong Kai, he called together the chiefs of three valleys for counsel.

The chief of the first one was Jinhuansanjie, of the second, Dongtuna, and of the third, Ahuinan. When these three came to the king's place, he said to them, "Our country has been invaded, and we must combine our forces to drive out the invaders. You three must lead your men to meet the enemy from three sides, and whoever conquers the enemy will be head of all the valleys."

It was arranged that Jinhuansanjie should march in the center division, with the others on his flanks. Each division had 50,000 men.

When scouts discovered that the Mans armies were coming, they at once reported it to Zhuge Liang, who called Zhao Yun and Wei Yan to his side, but gave them no orders. Next he sent for Wang Ping and Ma Zhong and said to them, "I dare

not send Zi-long (Zhao Yun) and Wen-zhang (Wei Yan) to fight the Mans because they do not know the country. You two are to go and meet the enemy on the right and the left. I will let them support you. Get your men ready and start tomorrow at dawn."

Then another two young officers, Zhang Ni and Zhang Yi, were ordered to oppose the center army. They were to prepare their men and start the next day with Wang Ping and Ma Zhong. Once more Zhuge Liang mentioned that he dared not send the two veterans because of their ignorance of the terrain.

Now Zhao Yun and Wei Yan began to look hurt. Noticing this, Zhuge Liang said, "I have no wish to pass you over but I fear that at your age, if you risk too much in the unfamiliar country and fall victims to the Mans, it will wear off your keen edges."

"But what if we know the geography of the country?" asked Zhao Yun.

"You two just take care and don't venture out," replied Zhuge Liang.

The two old soldiers left grumpily. Then Zhao Yun asked Wei Yan to his camp for counsel.

Zhao Yun said, "We're van leaders but he puts us aside on the pretext that we don't know the lie of the land and he appoints those young men instead. How can we bear this shame?"

“Let’s ride out and survey the ground this very minute,” said his colleague. “We can capture a few natives and make them show us the road. We’ll surely defeat these savages.”

Zhao Yun agreed and the two rode off. Before they had gone far they saw a cloud of dust in the distance. Climbing up a slope to get a better view, they saw a small party of mounted Mans coming toward them. The two waited till they were near and then suddenly burst out. The Mans, taken entirely by surprise, fled in panic but several of them were captured by the two warriors, who returned to camp with their prisoners. The captives were given wine and food, and when they had satisfied their hunger they were questioned.

They said, “The camp of Chief Jinhuansanjie is just ahead, by the entrance to the mountains. Beside it run two roads east and west, leading to the rear of the camps of the other two chiefs and to the Valley of Five Streams.”

The two leaders got together 5,000 men, took the captured men as guides, and set out about the second watch. It was a clear night with a bright moon and few stars. The army marched in the moonlight and reached the first camp about the fourth watch. The Mans soldiers were just preparing their morning meal, as they intended to attack at daybreak. The surprise raid by the two veterans threw the camp into confusion—the chief was slain by Zhao Yun and his head cut off.

Then Wei Yan took half the force and went east to the second camp. By the time he reached his destination day had dawned. When the chief learned of his coming, he drew up his men to oppose him. But suddenly there was a great uproar in front of

the stockade, and turmoil followed. It turned out that Wang Ping had also arrived to attack the Mans. Between the two forces the Mans were quickly beaten. Their chief, Dongtuna, got away. Wei Yan's men followed, but they failed to catch him.

Meanwhile, Zhao Yun had taken the other half of the force to attack the third camp in the west. When he arrived at its rear Ma Zhong was already attacking from the front. They also scored a success but the chief, Ahuinan, also escaped.

They all returned to see Zhuge Liang, who asked, "The two chiefs of the Mans have fled but where is the head of the first chief?"

Zhao Yun produced it. Then they reported that the other two chiefs had escaped by abandoning their horses and going over the hills on foot. They could not be followed.

"They are already my prisoners," said Zhuge Liang, laughing merrily.

None of the officers believed him. But soon after, the two chiefs were brought in by the two Zhangs. All were surprised.

Zhuge Liang said, "After I studied the map I knew where their camps would be positioned. Then I deliberately stirred up the keen fighting spirit of Zi-long and Wen-zhang so that they would make a supreme effort to seize the first camp and then divide their force to attack the other two camps. To support them I sent Wang Ping and Ma Zhong as reinforcements. I knew this task could only be accomplished by Zi-long and Wenzhang. I felt certain the two chiefs would

run away along the mountain paths, so I instructed Zhang Ni and Zhang Yi to wait for them there. They were supported by Guan Suo."

Bowing to their commander in admiration, all those present said, "Sir, your calculations are unfathomable, even to gods or spirits."

The two captive chiefs were then brought in. As soon as they appeared, Zhuge Liang loosened their bonds and gave them refreshments and clothes. Then he released them, admonishing them not to offend any more. They thanked him for their liberty with grateful tears and disappeared along a byroad.

After they left Zhuge Liang said to his officers, "Tomorrow Meng Huo will come in person to make an attack. We can capture him then."

So he called Zhao Yun and Wei Yan and gave them orders for the next day. They took the instructions and left, each with 5,000 men. Next he sent for Wang Ping and Guan Suo, to whom he also outlined a plan. They, too, left with a force. And then he sat in his tent to await the outcome.

The king of the Mans was sitting in his tent when his scouts came to tell him that his three chiefs had been captured and their armies scattered. This news threw him into a rage and he quickly got his army ready to fight with the men of Shu. Soon he met Wang Ping and the armies were arrayed for battle. Riding out to the front, Wang Ping looked over to the ranks of his enemy. Hundreds of Mans banners were unfurled and officers on horseback spread out to the two flanks, while in

the middle rode forth the king, Meng Huo, who wore a golden headdress inlaid with jewels, a red robe with fine tassels, a jade belt with a clasp of a lion's head, and a green pair of boots with pointed toes. He rode a frizzy-haired horse and carried two swords with the pine tree device on their handles.

Meng Huo looked haughtily at his foes, and then turning to his officers, said, "I have often heard people say that Zhuge Liang is good at warfare, but now I see that is false. Look at this array with its banners all in confusion and the ranks in disorder. There is not a weapon among all their swords and spears better than ours. If I had only realized this before, I would have fought them long ago. Who dares go out and capture a Shu officer to show them what sort of warriors we are?"

At once an officer rode out to fight with Wang Ping and the two engaged. But Wang Ping only fought a short time and then fled. The king at once urged his men to follow in quick pursuit. Then Guan Suo came up to fight, only to retreat again for some twenty li. Just as the Mans thought their enemies were overcome, a great shouting arose and two troops led by the two Zhangs appeared, one on either flank, and cut the Mans' path of retreat. At this Wang Ping and Guan Suo also turned back to attack and the Mans, surrounded both in front and behind, lost the day. Meng Huo and some of his officers fought their way out and made for the Jintai Mountains. The three forces of Shu followed and forced them on, and presently Zhao Yun appeared in front to block the road of escape for the fugitives.

Meng Huo hastily picked a path to go deeper into the mountains, but Zhao Yun's men spread around, and the Mans

could not make a stand. Here many were captured. Meng Huo and a few horsemen managed to get away into a valley, which however, soon became too narrow for the horses to advance. Meng Huo and his followers abandoned their horses and crawled up the mountains to flee, but very soon they fell upon Wei Yan, who had been sent by Zhuge Liang to lie in wait. Unable to withstand his opponent, Meng Huo was captured by Wei Yan. His few remaining men surrendered.

The king and his followers were taken to the main camp, where Zhuge Liang was waiting with wine and meat ready for the captives. But his tent was now guarded by a force of men seven ranks deep, all well armed with glittering weapons, as well as by soldiers bearing the golden ax and the broad-rimmed canopy with a twisted handle, which were presents from the Second Ruler. The feather-hatted drummers and clarion players were in front and behind, and the Imperial Guards spread out on both sides. The whole place inspired awe and fear.

Zhuge Liang was seated at the top of it all and watched the captives as they came forward in crowds. When they were all assembled, he ordered their bonds to be loosened and then he addressed them: “You are all honest people who have been unfortunate enough to be forced into this terrible battle by Meng Huo. I know your parents, your brothers, your wives and your children are anxiously watching by the gates for your return, and they are cut to the quick now that the news of defeat has reached their ears. They must be weeping bitterly for you. So I will set you all free to go home and comfort them.”

After they had been given some food and wine and a present of grain, he released them all. Filled with gratitude, they wept as they bowed to Zhuge Liang before they left.

Then Zhuge Liang told his men to bring the king before him. Soon guards hustled him in. He knelt in front of Zhuge Liang, who asked, "The late emperor treated you quite well—why did you rebel?"

"The land of Shu belonged to others and your lord seized it from them by force and called himself 'emperor.' My people have lived here for ages but you and your men come to invade my country without any reason. How can you talk of rebellion to me?"

"You are now my prisoner—will you admit defeat?"

"Why should I? The mountain path was too narrow and I fell into your hands by mistake."

"If you admit defeat, I will release you," said Zhuge Liang. "What do you say?"

"If you release me I will return, and when I have set my army in order I will come to fight you again. If you catch me once more I will concede defeat."

Zhuge Liang ordered his men to loosen his bonds and give him clothes and refreshments, as well as a horse and saddle. He was even escorted by a guide to help him find the road back to his own camp.

The captured chieftain is let go,
To yield the Mans are ever slow.

Who would win the next battle will be related in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Wu lies to the east of Shu and south of Wei.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-EIGHT

Crossing the Lu River Meng Huo Is Recaptured

Failing in His Trick Meng Huo Is Captured a Third Time

When they learned that their commander had released the king of the Mans, the officers came to his tent to enquire. "Meng Huo is the most important leader of all the Mans, and his capture is key to restoring order in the south," they said. "Why then, sir, did you release him?"

"I can capture him just as easily as I can get something out of my pocket. What I want to do is to win his heart so that peace may follow of itself."

However, the officers had no great confidence in the success of this policy of conciliation.

In the meantime, Meng Huo had reached the Lu River where he fell in with some of his defeated men, who were seeking news of their king's fate. Surprised but glad to see him, they bowed and asked him how he had been able to get back.

Meng Huo lied. "They confined me in a tent but I slew about a dozen of the guards and broke loose under the cover of the night. And then I met one of their sentinels, killed him, and snatched his horse."

They were very happy to hear this and crossed the river with him to their camp. Then Meng Huo assembled together all the other chiefs and gradually gathered the soldiers that had been released by Zhuge Liang. Finally, he was able to muster a fighting force of more than a 100,000 men.

The two leaders in the previous battle, Dongtuna and Ahuinan, had returned to their own places, and were summoned to join their king. Afraid to disobey, they came with their forces. When all had assembled, Meng Huo said: "I know Zhuge Liang is too full of ruses for us to conquer him in a fight—we will only fall victims to his base tricks. However, we must remember that his men are exhausted from their long march and they are unaccustomed to the sultry weather here, which are factors in our favor. They cannot hold out for long. Besides, we have the Lu River as our rampart. We will keep our boats and rafts on the south bank and build a long, mud wall. With such good defenses we can afford to wait and see what Zhuge Liang can do."

His speech met with general approval and his plan was carried out. The boats and rafts were collected along the southern bank and the wall built all around. Turrets were constructed among the high crags and hills, and plenty of large bows, crossbows, and balistae were set to prepare for a protracted period of defense. Moreover, grain and forage was supplied by his allied chiefs. Having made these preparations, Meng Huo felt perfectly secure.

In the meantime, Zhuge Liang had led his army to advance and his leading division was now close to the river. However, no boats or rafts could be found to cross and the current was too strong to consider fording. They could see the defenses on

the opposite bank, the mud wall and the turrets all fully manned. The weather was burning hot, for it was the fifth month* of the year, and the southern heat was intolerable. The soldiers could not put on their armor, nor even their clothing.

Zhuge Liang went to inspect the river. When he returned to his tent he assembled his officers, to whom he issued the following order: "The enemy is securely established on the south bank, ready to repel our attack. Yet, having come so far we cannot return without success. For the present you must all seek what shelter you can find in the forests to rest and refresh your men."

Then he sent Lu Kai to select a cool spot about a hundred li from the river, where he built four stockades to be defended by the four young officers, Wang Ping, Guan Suo, and the two Zhangs. Within the stockades he built huts for the men and sheds for the horses, so that they were sheltered from the scorching sun.

However, the advisor Jiang Wan was apprehensive of the location of these shelters. He went to see Zhuge Liang to whom he said, "I find Lu Kai's shelters very unsuitable. He has made the same mistake as our late king when he suffered the defeat at the hands of Wu. He has not taken into account the surroundings of the stockades. If the Mans should cross over and start a fire, there could be no rescue."

"Don't worry," said Zhuge Liang, smiling. "I have my plans."

But Jiang Wan, as well as the others, did not know what their commander meant to do.

At this time Ma Dai arrived from Chengdu, bringing with him medicines for summer ailments and more supplies of grain. After paying his respects to Zhuge Liang, he proceeded to distribute the medicine and the supplies he had brought to the four stockades.

Zhuge Liang asked, “How many men have you brought?”

“Three thousand.”

“My men are weary and worn out. I want to use yours. You have no objections?”

“Of course not—mine are also government troops. If you wish to use my men, sir, we are ready to die for you.”

“This Meng Huo is established on the river and we have no means of crossing. I want to intercept his supplies first so that his men may mutiny.”

“How can we do that?”

“Some distance downstream there is a place called Shakou, where the current is slow. You can cross there on rafts. Take your men across and cut his supply route. After that you are to ally with the two chiefs whose lives I spared and make them your spies on the inside. Remember, there should be no mistakes.”

Ma Dai went off gladly with his men to Shakou, where they set about crossing the river at once. As the water was shallow they did not trouble to make rafts, but just tucked up their clothes and waded in. But halfway across, the men suddenly

fell down. When they had been rescued and taken to shore they began to bleed from the nose and mouth and presently died. Greatly alarmed, Ma Dai hastened back to tell Zhuge Liang, who called in the native guides and asked them what this meant. They told him that it happened every summer. In the hot season, poisonous miasma accumulated over the waters of the Lu River, especially during the heat of the day. Anyone who drank the water would surely die. Travelers who wished to cross had to wait till nighttime, when the water was cool and the poisonous vapors did not rise. Before crossing they should also have a full meal.

Zhuge Liang then asked the local guides to lead the way. He also picked out five hundred well-seasoned soldiers to go with Ma Dai to Shakou. This time they lashed together poles to make rafts and at midnight the crossing was safely accomplished. Once on the opposite shore, Ma Dai ordered the guides to lead his troops to where all the grain wagons of the Mans had to pass. This place was a narrow gorge, called Cross Hill Gorge. High hills rose on both sides, leaving a very narrow pathway in the middle. Only single file was possible, as the pathway was wide enough for one man and one horse.

Ma Dai at once occupied this crucial point and stationed his force there. A stockade was put up with tents inside. The Mans, unaware of the danger, soon came up with a convoy of grain, and it was quickly seized. The men ran off to the king's camp to tell him.

Meng Huo, thinking all was safe during the hot season, was indulging himself in wine and music every day, and military matters were far from his thoughts. In his cups he conceded

Zhuge Liang was full of schemes but said his army had nothing to fear.

"If I attempt to oppose Zhuge Liang I will certainly fall victim to some wile of his. However, my waiting policy is a safe one. With our defenses, and the river to thwart them, we can wait for the heat to overcome these men of Shu, who cannot stand the sweltering weather. They will have to retreat and then we can harass them. We will capture this Zhuge Liang."

He lay back and laughed at the thought. However, one chief, more prudent than the others, stood forth and said, "But what about the shallows at Shakou? It would be a real threat if the men of Shu should get across there secretly. We ought to send men to guard it."

"You are a native of these parts and should know better. How I hope the enemy will try to get across there! Why, they will all perish in the water."

"But what if the natives tell them to cross only in the night?"

"Don't be so anxious," said Meng Huo. "How can our own people help the enemy?"

It was just then that news came to say that the men of Shu had secretly crossed the river and, moreover, had seized the Cross Hill Gorge, their main road for the transportation of their grain. The flags indicated that the commander was Ma Dai.

Meng Huo affected indifference. "That fellow is nothing to worry about," he sneered.

He sent a junior officer with 3,000 men to recapture the gorge and reopen the grain route. When Ma Dai saw the Mans soldiers approaching, he deployed his 2,000 men in front of the hills in battle array. Then the Mans officer rode out to give battle. This was but a small engagement, as the man fell at the first stroke of Ma Dai's sword. The Mans ran away at once.

They returned to the king's camp and told him what had happened. He gathered his officers and asked for someone else to go up against Ma Dai.

"I will," volunteered Dongtuna.

The king gave him 3,000 men. After he had gone, Meng Huo thought it would be wise to keep others from crossing the river at Shakou. So he sent a force to guard the place.

Dongtuna duly arrived at the gorge and made a camp. Ma Dai came out to meet him. Among his men were some who recognized the leader of the Mans and told Ma Dai how he had been captured and released. So Ma Dai galloped toward him, shouting reproaches at his ingratitude for rebelling again. Flushed with shame, Dongtuna went away without fighting. Ma Dai followed for a time and then returned. Dongtuna went back and told the king that Ma Dai was too strong for him.

But Meng Huo was angry, crying, "You are a traitor! I know you have received kindness from Zhuge Liang and that is why you would not fight."

He ordered Dongtuna to be executed. At the intervention of the other chiefs, however, the death penalty was commuted,

but the poor man was severely beaten, one hundred strokes with heavy rods.

Many of the chiefs, who sympathized with the beaten man, went to see him. They said, “Though we live in the Mans country we have never thought of rebelling against the central government, nor has the government ever encroached upon our land. It is this Meng Huo who has forced us into this rebellion. Zhuge Liang is so clever that no one can guess what he may do. Even Cao Cao and Sun Quan fear him. How much more must we? Moreover, we have received kindness at his hands and owe him our lives. We ought to show our gratitude. Let us slay this Meng Huo and submit to Zhuge Liang so that our people will not suffer.”

Dongtuna asked, “Are you all willing to do that?”

At this, all those who had been prisoners and later released cried with one voice, “Yes, we are.”

Without delay Dongtuna took a sharp sword, placed himself at the head of more than a hundred mutineers, and rushed into the king’s camp. At that moment Meng Huo was, as usual, intoxicated and lay in his tent. The mutineers rushed in. They found two officers keeping guard there.

“You also received kindness from Zhuge Liang and ought to repay it,” cried Dongtuna.

They replied, “Do not trouble yourself, General. We will capture him alive and hand him over to Zhuge Liang.”

So they bound the king securely, took him down to the river, and crossed in a boat to the northern bank. There they halted while they sent a messenger to report to Zhuge Liang.

Now Zhuge Liang had already been informed of this by his spies. He issued orders for every camp to arrange their weapons in order. When this was done, he told the chiefs to bring up their prisoner, and asked the others to return to their own camps to wait for his orders. Dongtuna came to his tent first and told everything to Zhuge Liang, who comforted him and gave him rich gifts. Then he sent him away with the other chiefs. When they had gone, the executioners brought in Meng Huo.

"You said once before that if you were captured again you would admit defeat," said Zhuge Liang, smiling. "Now will you yield?"

"This is not your work," replied the king. "It is the work of these minions of mine who want to hurt me. How can I yield this way?"

"If I free you again, what then?"

"I am only a member of the Mans, I know, but I am not wholly ignorant of the art of war. If you, sir, let me return to my camp I will muster another army and fight a decisive battle with you. If you capture me again then I will yield with all my heart. I will not go back on my word."

"If you refuse to yield next time you are captured, I will not pardon you."

At Zhuge Liang's orders the cords were loosened and refreshments were brought in for the prisoner, who was also asked to be seated.

Zhuge Liang added, "Since I left my cottage in my home town I have never failed to win a battle or to take a city. Why do you Mans not yield?"

Meng Huo kept silent and did not answer the question. After the wine, Zhuge Liang rode out with Meng Huo to show him the piles of supplies and heaps of weapons around the camps. Pointing to the accumulation of grain and weapons, Zhuge Liang said, "You are silly not to yield to me. You see, I have veteran soldiers and able officers as well as an abundant supply of grain and war materiel; how can you hope to prevail against me? If you yield I will inform His Majesty to retain your rank as king and your descendants will succeed as perpetual guardians of the Mans country. What do you say?"

The king replied, "I would like to yield but the men of my country would not be content. If you release me once more I will bring my own men round so that they will not be opposed to this. When all of us are of one mind, I will submit."

Zhuge Liang seemed pleased to hear this. He kept Meng Huo in his tent to drink till night, when he himself escorted him to the riverside and sent him home in a boat. However, Meng Huo's first act on his return to his own camp was to assassinate the two chiefs, Dongtuna and Ahuinan. Their corpses were thrown into a gully. Then he sent his own trusted men to guard the most crucial points, while he himself led a force to fight with Ma Dai at Cross Hill Gorge. But when he got there he saw no sign of the enemy, and, on

questioning the local inhabitants, he learned that the Shu army had taken the store of grain and forage and re-crossed the river to join the main body.

Meng Huo returned to his own camp and called in his brother, Meng You, to whom he said that he had found out everything about the enemy. Then he thought out a plan and asked his brother to carry it out.

Instructed by his brother, Meng You took a hundred men to carry all sorts of treasures—gold, jewels, pearls, ivory, and rhinoceros horns—and crossed the river to see Zhuge Liang. But immediately after he had landed on the other bank, drums rolled and horns blew. A body of troops under Ma Dai spread out in front of him. As he did not expect to meet an army Meng You was very much alarmed. But Ma Dai only asked him what he had come for. When he learned the reason of his arrival, he told Meng You to wait outside while he sent a messenger to tell the commander about this.

At the moment Zhuge Liang was in his tent discussing with several of his subordinates how to subdue the Mans. When the messenger came to announce that Meng You had come bearing gifts, Zhuge Liang turned to Ma Su and asked, “Do you know why this man has come?”

“I dare not say it out—but let me write it down and see if it agrees with yours,” replied Ma Su.

Zhuge Liang consented. So Ma Su wrote something down and handed the paper to his chief, who had no sooner read it than he clapped his hands with joy, crying, “Exactly what I think.

And I have already made arrangements for the recapture of Meng Huo."

Then Zhao Yun was called in and some orders were whispered into his ear. Next came Wei Yan who also went off with a secret command. Three other officers also came and left with particular instructions from their chief.

After they were all gone for their secret missions, the bearer of gifts was called. He came and bowed low at the entrance of the tent, saying, "My brother Meng Huo is so grateful to you for sparing his life that he feels bound to repay your kindness in some way. As he has but nothing of value to offer he can only collect some gold and pearls and trifling jewels, which you may find useful as rewards to give to your soldiers. Afterwards he will send tribute to your king."

"Where is your brother at this moment?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"Having been the recipient of your great kindness, he has gone to the Silver Pit Valley to collect more treasures. He will soon return."

"How many men have you brought?"

"Only about a hundred; I dared not bring a larger number. They are just porters to carry the gifts."

These men were brought in for Zhuge Liang's inspection. They were all tall and powerful soldiers with blue eyes, swarthy faces, auburn but dishelved hair and brown beards. They wore earrings and went about barefoot. Zhuge Liang

asked them to sit down and told his men to urge the guests to drink to their hearts' content.

In the meantime, Meng Huo was anxiously waiting in his tent for news from his brother. Then he was told that two of his brother's men had returned. He immediately called them in and questioned them eagerly. They told him that Zhuge Liang was very pleased to receive the presents and had even invited all the porters into the tent to be treated with plenty of meat and wine. They also brought him a secret message from his brother, saying that at the second watch that night he was to join him in attacking the Shu camp, from both within and without, to ensure a complete victory.

This was indeed very good news to him. He at once assembled 30,000 men and divided them into three bodies. After that, he called up the chiefs and told them to prepare their men for the night raid. "Each army must carry the means of making fire," he added, "and as soon as you arrive at the Shu camp, light a fire as a signal. I myself will attack the central tent to capture Zhuge Liang."

Following his order, the armies marched out after dusk and crossed the river. Meng Huo, with a hundred followers, made directly for the main camp of Shu. They met with no opposition all along the way. Presently they got to the camp gate and Meng Huo led his party straight in. But the camp seemed to be deserted—not a soul was in sight.

Meng Huo rode right up to the central tent, which was brilliantly lit with lamps, and lying about the place were his brother and all his men, dead drunk. This turned out to be another ruse of Zhuge Liang's. He had told two of his

subordinates to entertain Meng You and his men, who were urged to drink while a play was performed to amuse them. But the wine had been heavily drugged and the men had all fallen unconscious. One or two who had recovered a little could not speak when Meng Huo questioned them—they only pointed to their mouths.

Meng Huo then saw that he had been the victim of yet another of Zhuge Liang's ruses. He hastily rescued his brother and the others and set off to join his main army.

But even as he turned, torches flared and shouting thundered all around. The Mans were frightened and took to their heels. They were at once pursued by a troop under Wang Ping. The king fled to his left division, but another troop appeared in front of him and Wei Yan was the leader. He hastened to escape to his right division, only to be stopped by Zhao Yun. Now he was attacked by three forces and there was no escape for him on any side. In the end he abandoned all his men, and alone on his horse he made a wild dash for the river.

As he reached the bank he saw a boat in the river with about a dozen of his own soldiers on board. Hurriedly he hailed the boat and jumped on board as soon as it touched the bank. But no sooner had he embarked than suddenly he was seized and bound. The boat was actually part of Zhuge Liang's plan to capture Meng Huo and the Mans soldiers were actually Ma Dai and his men in disguise.

Most of Meng Huo's men accepted Zhuge Liang's call to surrender, who did not injure any of them but placated them with kind words. The still smoldering fire was extinguished. In a short time the prisoners were brought in—Ma Dai

dragging along Meng Huo, Zhao Yun hustling up his brother, and the other officers leading forth the other chiefs.

Zhuge Liang looked at the king and laughed. “That was a childish ruse of yours to send your brother with presents to pretend submission. Did you really think I could not see through such a simple trick? But here you are once again captured by me. Now do you yield?”

“I am a prisoner because my brother was too gluttonous so he was poisoned. If I had only played his part myself and left him to support me with the army, I should have surely succeed. I am the victim of fate but not because I am incapable. Why should I yield?”

“Remember this is the third time,” said Zhuge Liang. “Why not yield?”

Meng Huo lowered his head and made no answer.

“All right,” said Zhuge Liang with a smile. “I will let you go once more.”

“Sir, if you will let me and my brother go we will get together our relatives and servants and fight you once more. If I am caught again I will surely admit defeat, and submit wholeheartedly.”

“I will scarcely pardon you next time,” said Zhuge Liang. “You had better be careful. Study your book of strategies diligently and muster together your comrades. Make sure you adopt a good plan to avoid mistakes.”

The king and his brother and all the chiefs were released from their bonds. They thanked Zhuge Liang for his clemency and left.

By the time the freed prisoners had crossed the river the army of Shu had already gained the southern side of the bank, which was lined with their soldiers and flags. As Meng Huo reached his camp, he saw Ma Dai sitting on high. Pointing at him with his sword, Ma Dai said: “Next time you are caught you will not be able to escape so easily.”

When Meng Huo came to his own tent he found Zhao Yun in possession and his army, deployed in order. Zhao Yun was seated beneath the large banner, his hand on his sword, and as the king passed by, he also added: “Do not forget how generously the prime minister has treated you.”

Meng Huo muttered gratitude and passed on. Just as he was leaving the hills at the boundary he saw Wei Yan and his thousand men drawn up on the slopes. Wei Yan shouted harshly, “We have now penetrated into the inmost recesses of your country and have taken all your defensive positions, yet you are stubborn enough to hold out against our victorious army. Next time you are caught you will be hacked to pieces. There will be no more pardons.”

With their arms covering their heads, Meng Huo and his followers ran away in fear to their own territory.

In the fifth month he marched into the land wild,
The Lu River, deadly with miasma, is clear and bright.
But Zhuge Liang pledged to subdue the south
Thereby to repay the three visits of his late lord.

Little did he care about the toil
Of the seven encounters with the Mans.

The whole army of Shu crossed the river and were rewarded with feasts. Then Zhuge Liang explained to them the strategy he had used to capture the king.

"I let Meng Huo see our camp the second time he was our prisoner because I wanted to tempt him into raiding it. He knows something about warfare, so I dangled our supplies and resources before his eyes, deliberately exposing our weaknesses, for I knew full well that he would resort to using fire. His purpose of sending his brother here to pretend submission was to plant his men inside our camp to assist his military action. I have captured and released him three times because I want to win the hearts of the Mans, not to do away with their race. I now explain my policy clearly to you so that you will spare no efforts and do your best for the country."

They all bowed and said, "Sir, you are indeed perfect in wisdom, benevolence, and valor. You are superior to even Lu Shang or Zhang Liang of the old days."

Zhuge Liang replied modestly, "How can I expect to equal great men of old? But I rely on your assistance, and together we will succeed."

This speech of their leader's pleased them all mightily.

In the meantime Meng Huo, humiliated at being captured three times, returned angrily to his home base, where he sent his comrades with handsome gifts to the chiefs of many neighboring districts, as well as all the Mans clans, to recruit

warriors that were armed with shields and swords. He got together hundreds of thousands of men. They all assembled on an appointed day, streaming like clouds or mists, ready to be commanded by Meng Huo.

Shu scouts learned about this assemblage and reported it to Zhuge Liang, who said: “This is what I was waiting for. I wanted them all to come and see for themselves our might.”

So saying he ordered his carriage and went out to inspect.

Oh, let our enemy’s fierce courage glow
That the strategist’s greater might may show.

The result of the battle will be related in the next chapter.

Footnote

* June or early July by the Roman calendar.

CHAPTER EIGHTY-NINE

Zhuge Liang Designs the Fourth Successful Ruse

Meng Huo Is Captured a Fifth Time

Zhuge Liang went out in his carriage to survey the terrain, escorted by a few hundred horsemen. Presently he came to a river, named the West Er. The current was slow but there were no boats or rafts to get across. Zhuge Liang ordered the escort to cut down some trees and make a raft. They did so but the raft sank. Turning to Lu Kai, he asked him for advice.

Lu Kai said, "I hear close by there is a mountain covered with bamboo trees, some of which are several spans in girth. We can make a bridge of them for the army to cross."

Therefore a great many soldiers were sent up the hills, where they felled enough bamboo trees and floated them down the river. At the narrowest point they made a bridge a hundred feet or so in width. Then the main army was brought down to the river and camped along the bank. With the river as their moat and the floating bridge as the camp gate, they constructed three large mud stockades on the south bank and waited for the coming of the Mans soldiers.

They had not long to wait. Meng Huo, hot with rage, came quickly with his large army. As soon as he got near the river,

he led his fierce warriors to challenge the first stockade. Zhuge Liang went forth to meet him in his usual attire, wearing a silk headdress, a white robe, and holding in his hand a feather fan. He sat in a chariot surrounded on both sides by his officers. Looking across at his opponent, he saw Meng Huo in a mail of rhinoceros hide and a bright red helmet. In his left hand he bore a shield, and in his right he gripped a sword. Riding a red ox he poured forth abuse and insults, while his men darted to and fro brandishing their weapons.

At once Zhuge Liang ordered the army to withdraw into the stockades and bar the gates. The Mans came close up to the stockades and pranced about naked, shouting insults.

Within the stockade the officers grew very angry and they went in a body to their leader to beg to engage. But he refused. “Those people have always been wild and lawless. They have come with all the ferocity imaginable. In that mood we are no match for them. So it’s better to remain inside for a few days till their viciousness has spent itself. Then I have a good plan to overcome them.”

Several days passed and the men of Shu maintained a firm defense. From a high position Zhuge Liang saw that the keen vigor of the Mans had given way to careless idleness. He called together his officers and asked them if they dared to go out and give battle. They all rejoiced at the suggestion. So he first summoned Zhao Yun and Wei Yan, who were given secret orders, and set out without delay. Then Wang Ping and Ma Zhong were also given instructions and departed.

Next he said to Ma Dai, “I’m going to abandon these stockades and retreat to the north of the river. As soon as the army has crossed you’re to take apart the floating bridge and set it up again downstream for Zhao Yun and Wei Yan and their men to cross over.”

Lastly, Zhang Yi was ordered to remain by the camp and light it up at night as if it was still occupied. If Meng Huo pursued, he was to cut off his retreat. After he had arranged everything Zhuge Liang led the rest of the army in retreat, with Guan Suo alone to escort his carriage.

The soldiers left the stockades but the lights were on as usual. The Mans saw this from a distance and dared not attack. At daybreak the next morning, Meng Huo led his men to the stockades and found not a man or horse inside. Only some hundreds of carts of grain and fodder lay abandoned.

“They have abandoned the camp,” said Meng You. “Could this be a ruse?”

“I think Zhuge Liang must have some important business in the capital, which has forced him to leave in a hurry without his baggage. Either Wu has invaded or Wei has attacked. He has kept these lamps on to make us think the camps are still inhabited, while he has run away leaving everything behind. We must not lose this good opportunity, but must pursue at once.”

So the king urged his army onward, himself heading the leading division. When they reached the bank of the West Er River, they saw their enemy had set up orderly camps on the opposite side, their banners flying like a brightly tinted cloud

of silk. Along the bank stood a wall of cloth. They dared not attack.

Meng Huo said to his brother, “This means Zhuge Liang is afraid that we may pursue, so he has set up a temporary camp on the north bank. He will retreat in a couple of days.”

Therefore he ordered his army to camp on the riverbank and sent men into the hills to hack bamboo trees to make rafts. The boldest of the soldiers were placed in front of the camp. However, little did Meng Huo suspect that the army of Shu had already infiltrated into his camp.

That day there was a strong wind blowing. Suddenly the Mans saw great lights spring up all around them, and at the same time the rolling of drums heralded an attack by the men of Shu. In the confusion the Mans and their allies fought among themselves. Meng Huo, greatly alarmed, fled with all his clan and dependents. They fought their way through and made a dash for their old camp.

Before they reached it there appeared an enemy force led by Zhao Yun. Meng Huo hastened to return to the riverside and sought refuge in the mountains. But he was stopped by another force under Ma Dai. With only a dozen of his men left he escaped into a valley, where he saw clouds of dust and the glow of torches rise on three sides. He was forced to flee toward the east, the only side remaining clear. However, he had just negotiated a mountain pass when he noticed in front of a woods a carriage accompanied by scores of followers. And in that carriage sat Zhuge Liang.

Laughing heartily, Zhuge Liang said, “Meng Huo, you are doomed to defeat! I have been waiting for you here for a long time.”

In wrath Meng Huo turned to his followers and cried, “Thrice have I been the victim of this man’s base tricks and put to shame. Now Heaven has sent him across my path. You must rush forward and attack him with all your energy. Let us cut him to pieces, carriage and all.”

Several of his men followed Meng Huo as he, shouting loudly, charged toward his foes. But as they got near, crash! all stumbled and disappeared into hidden pits. Instantly out came Wei Yan and his men from the woods. One by one, the Mans were pulled out of the pits and bound tight with cords.

Zhuge Liang returned to his camp, where he busied himself in soothing the captured Mans soldiers and the chiefs, most of whom had by then returned to their own villages with their followers. All those that remained yielded to him. They were well fed and assured of safety. Then they were all sent home, and they went off grateful at this kindness.

By and by Zhang Yi brought up the king’s brother. Zhuge Liang reproached him for not trying to stop his brother from rebelling. “Your brother is stupid and stubborn,” he said to Meng You. “You ought to remonstrate with him. Now he has been a captive for the fourth time. How can he have the effrontery to look anyone in the face?”

A deep flush of shame rose over his face as he threw himself to the ground, begging for life.

Zhuge Liang said, “If I want to put you to death, I do not have to wait until today. I will pardon you this time but you must talk to your brother.”

So Meng You was loosened from his bonds and allowed to go free. He bowed and went away weeping.

Soon Wei Yan brought up the king, to whom Zhuge Liang simulated great rage, saying, “You are in my hands again. What can you say now?”

“I blundered into your trick again,” said the king. “I will die with my eyes open.”*

Zhuge Liang shouted to the guards to take him away and behead him. Meng Huo betrayed no sign of fear at this, but as he was being hustled out he turned to his captor and said, “If you could free me only once more, I would wipe out the shame of my earlier four defeats.”

At this bold reply Zhuge Liang laughed and ordered the guards to untie his bonds. Then he gave him wine and invited him to sit in the tent.

Zhuge Liang said, “Four times you have been treated generously and yet you are still defiant. Why?”

“Though I am what you call a barbarian, I would scorn to employ your vile ruses. How can I submit?”

“I have released you four times. Do you think you can still give battle?”

“If you catch me again I will yield from the bottom of my heart and I will give all I have to reward your men. I pledge never to rebel again.”

Zhuge Liang smiled and let him go. The king thanked him and left. Then mustering several thousand men, he went southward. Before long he fell in with his brother, Meng You, who had got together the remnant of his army and was on his way to avenge his brother. As soon as they saw each other the brothers fell into each other’s arms and, weeping bitterly, they related to each other what they had suffered.

Meng You said, “We can’t stand against the enemy. We’ve been defeated several times. I think we’d better go into the mountains and hide in some deep caves where they can’t find us. The summer heat will prove too much for them to bear and they’ll leave, sooner or later.”

“Where can we hide?” asked his brother.

“I know a place in the southwest called Bald Dragon Cave, and the chieftain, Duo Si, is a friend of mine. Let’s seek refuge with him.”

Meng Huo agreed and sent his brother first to go and arrange it.

So Meng You went. When he learned about this, the chieftain, Duo Si, at once came out with his soldiers to welcome Meng Huo into his cave. After the exchange of greetings, Meng Huo related what had happened to his host.

Duo Si said, “Have no worries. If those men from Shu come here I will guarantee that none of them will return home alive. And Zhuge Liang will meet his death here, too.”

Delighted, Meng Huo inquired of his host how this could be done.

Duo Si said, “There are only two roads leading to this cave—the one you used lies to the northeast, where the ground is level and solid, and the waters are sweet. Men and horses may both travel along it. But if we seal the mouth of the route with a barricade of logs and rocks, no force, however strong, can get in. The other road to the northwest is precipitous and narrow, and hence very dangerous. Though there are some paths, these are beset with venomous serpents and scorpions, and as evening comes on the whole area is enveloped in a smog that does not disperse until noontime the next day. One can only pass that road between three and seven in the afternoon, but the water there is undrinkable, making that road virtually impossible to cross for both horses and men. In addition there are four poisonous springs there. One is called the Dumb Spring. Its water is pleasant to taste, but if one drinks it one becomes dumb and dies in about ten days. The second one, called the Spring of Destruction, is as hot as soup. If one bathes in it, one’s flesh rots till the bones are exposed and the victim dies. The third one is the Black Spring, which has greenish water. If the water is sprinkled on a man’s body, his hands and feet turn black and he dies. The last one, named the Soft Spring, has icy cold water. If one drinks this water, the drinker’s breath is chilled and his whole being goes all weak and he soon dies. Neither birds nor insects are found in this region, and no one but the Han general Ma Yuan, who was styled ‘General of Subduing the

Waves', has ever set foot on that road. Now the northeast road will be blocked and you may hide here perfectly safe from those men of Shu, for, finding that way blocked, they will try the other road, which is waterless save for the four deadly springs. No matter how many men they have, they will perish. There will be no need of weapons."

"Now at last I have found a place to live in," cried Meng Huo, striking his forehead in great relief. Then looking toward the north he said, "Even Zhuge Liang's cunning schemes will be of no avail. The four springs alone will defeat him and avenge my army."

The two brothers settled down comfortably as guests of Duo Si, with whom they spent the days in feasting.

In the meantime, as the Mans did not appear, Zhuge Liang gave orders to leave the West Er River and press southward. It was then the sixth month, and the weather was blazing hot. A poem describes the scorching heat of the deep south:

The hills are arid, the valleys dry,
A raging heat fills all the sky,
Throughout the whole wide universe
No spot exists where heat is worse.

Another poem runs:

The glowing sun darts out fierce rays,
No cloud gives shelter from the blaze,
In parching heat there pants a crane,
And turtles moan in the hissing main.
The brook's cool margin now I love,

Or idle stroll through bamboo grove.
Wretched are those warriors who marched
In iron mail to go out for war.

In spite of the sultry heat, the men of Shu journeyed southward. On the way scouts brought news of Meng Huo's retreat into the Bald Dragon Valley and the barricading of the key route leading to its entrance. They also said that the route was garrisoned, and the hills were precipitous and impassable.

So Zhuge Liang called in Lu Kai and questioned him, who answered: "I have heard there is another route into that valley but I do not know exactly where it is."

Then the senior official, Jiang Wan, tried to dissuade him from advancing. "Meng Huo is repeatedly captured. He must have been scared out of his wits and will not dare to venture out again. Our men are exhausted with this intense heat and little is to be gained by prolonging the campaign. I think the best move is to return to our own country."

"If we do that we will fall into the trap of Meng Huo's scheme," said Zhuge Liang. "If we retreat he will certainly follow. Besides, having advanced so far, it will be foolish to turn back now."

So he ordered Wang Ping to lead the first division, taking with him some of the recently surrendered Mans soldiers as guides to look for a road to get to the valley from the northwest. Wang Ping found the road they were looking for. Presently they got to the first spring, where the thirsty men and horses had a good drink.

Wang Ping returned to report his success but by the time he reached camp he and all his men had lost the power of speech. They could only point to their mouths. Zhuge Liang, who knew they had been poisoned, was much alarmed. He went forward in his light carriage to find out the cause, accompanied by dozens of his men. When he came to the spring he saw the water was clear but very deep. A mass of vapor hung about the surface, rising and falling. The men would not touch the water. Getting off the carriage, Zhuge Liang went up the hill to view the terrain. All he saw was rugged mountains. A deep silence hung over the whole place, unbroken even by the cry of a bird. He was greatly perplexed.

Suddenly he noticed an old temple far away among the high crags. With the aid of hanging creepers he managed to clamber up, and in a chamber hewn out of the rock he saw the statue of an officer. Beside it was a tablet saying the temple was dedicated to Ma Yuan, the famous general who had preceded him in coming to that wild land. The natives had erected it to offer sacrifices to the leader, who had overcome the Mans in the old days.

Zhuge Liang, much impressed, bowed before the image of the general and said: “I, Zhuge Liang, have received from my late lord the sacred mission of protecting his son. Now at my new lord’s order I have come here to subdue the Mans in order that the land might be free from trouble for when I begin my campaign against Wei and conquer Wu, in order to restore the glory of the Hans. But the soldiers are unfamiliar with the country. Some of them have drunk the water from a poisonous spring and have become dumb. I earnestly pray that your honored spirit, out of regard for the Han dynasty,

will manifest your holy power by safeguarding and assisting our army."

After the prayer Zhuge Liang left the temple to try to find some natives to make inquiries. Then in the distance he saw coming toward him from the hill opposite an aged man of unusual appearance, who had a cane in his hand to help him in walking. When he reached the temple, Zhuge Liang asked the venerable visitor to walk in. After exchanging greetings, they sat down on some stones, facing each other.

Zhuge Liang asked the old gentleman who he was.

The old man evaded the question but said, "Sir, I know you well by repute, and am happy to meet you. The Mans are deeply grateful to you for sparing their lives."

Then Zhuge Liang asked him about the mystery of the spring. The old man told him all about the four poisonous springs and the smog.

"Then the Mans cannot be conquered," said Zhuge Liang in despair, when the old man had finished. "If they are not subdued, how can we repress Wu, overcome Wei, and restore the Hans? I will fail in the mission set me by my late king. I would rather die than stay alive!"

"Do not lose heart, sir," said the aged man. "I can point you to a place, where you can find a cure to all of this."

"What exalted advice have you to confer upon me? I hope you will instruct me."

"West of here, not far off, is a valley, and twenty li inside it you will find a stream, called the Stream of Ever Lasting Peace. Near there lives a recluse known as the Hermit of the Stream. He has not left the valley these many decades. Behind his cottage there gushes out a spring of water, called the Spring of Peace and Happiness. It provides a cure for the poisons of the four springs. Bathing in the spring will also cure the skin diseases or sickness from inhaling the miasma. Moreover, in front of his cottage grows a special kind of plant, with leaves like leek. Chewing a leaf of this protects one from being poisoned by miasma. You, sir, must go there and get these remedies without delay."

Zhuge Liang humbly bowed to this aged gentleman and said, "Venerable sir, I am immensely grateful to you for your kindness and compassion. You have saved all our lives. May I ask again by what honored surname I may address you?"

The old man rose and walked into the temple, saying, "I am the spirit of this mountain, sent by General Ma Yuan to guide you."

As he said this he shouted at the solid rock behind the temple and it opened of itself to let him in.

Zhuge Liang, whose astonishment was beyond measure, made another obeisance to the mountain spirit and went down by the way he had come. Then he returned to his camp.

The next day, bearing incense and gifts, he took Wang Ping and his stricken men to the spot that the old man had indicated. They quickly found the valley and followed its narrow path till they came to an enclosure where tall pines,

lofty cypresses, luxuriant bamboo, and exotic flowers sheltered several thatched-roofed cottages. An exquisite fragrance pervaded the whole place.

Delighted, Zhuge Liang proceeded to knock at the door. A lad answered his knock, and before Zhuge Liang could introduce himself the host appeared and asked, “Could it be that my visitor is the Prime Minister of Han?”

Zhuge Liang saw at the door a man with blue eyes and yellowish hair, wearing a bamboo headdress, straw sandals, and a white robe girded by a black sash.

“Honored sir, how do you know who I am?” asked Zhuge Liang with a smile.

“How could I not have heard of your expedition to the south?”

He invited Zhuge Liang to enter, and when they had seated themselves in their relative positions as host and guest, Zhuge Liang said: “My former lord, the late Emperor, confided to me the care of his son and successor. Now, at the command of the new Emperor, I have led an army to this country to subdue the Mans so that they will obey the rule of the central government. But to my disappointment, Meng Huo has hidden himself in a certain valley, and some of my men have been poisoned by the water in the Dumb Spring. But last night the late general, Ma Yuan, commander of a much earlier expedition, manifested his sacred presence and told me that you, exalted sir, have a cure for this poison. I beg you to have compassion on us and bestow on us some of your holy water to save the lives of my men.”

The recluse replied, “I am only a worthless old man of the wild woods, unworthy to trouble you to come all the way to visit. The water you desire flows out at the back of my cottage.”

The lad then showed Wang Ping and his dumb soldiers to the stream, where he scooped up the water for them to drink. At once they emitted some poisonous mucus and their power of speech was restored. The lad also led the soldiers to the Stream of Ever Lasting Peace to bathe.

Inside the cottage, Zhuge Liang was treated with tea of cypress cones and a conserve of pine flowers. His host also told him that there were many serpents and scorpions in the valleys and that the water in the local streams were unfit to drink when wind had blown willow flowers into them. The only way to find drinking water was to dig wells.

Then Zhuge Liang asked for some leaves of his plant as an antidote against the miasma. The recluse allowed the soldiers to take what they needed. And so every man was told to put a leaf in his mouth and thus became immune from the smog.

Zhuge Liang, with a low bow, then begged to be told the name of his benefactor.

“I am Meng Huo’s elder brother,” said the recluse, smiling. “My name is Meng Jie.”

Zhuge Liang was startled.

“Do not be afraid,” said the recluse. “Let me explain. We are three brothers of the same parents and I am the eldest. Our

parents are now both dead. My two brothers Huo and You, being headstrong and vicious, would not submit to the imperial rule. I have tried to talk to them many times but they persisted in their rebelliousness. Finally, under an assumed name, I retired to this spot. I am ashamed for my brothers' rebellion, which has brought you so much trouble as to make an expedition into this uncultivated land. For my responsibility in this I deserve to die ten thousand times, and I entreat you to forgive me."

Zhuge Liang sighed, saying, "Now I believe that old story of the robber Zhi and the sage Liu Xia-hui* can also happen today. Men renowned for virtue and notorious for villainy may come from the same stock."

Then he said to his host, "Would you wish me to report your merits to the Emperor and create you ruler of the land?"

"Well, how will I desire rank and wealth again, when I am here because of my contempt for all such things?"

Zhuge Liang then produced some gold and silk and offered them to him as gifts, but the recluse firmly declined to accept anything. Touched by his high sense of rectitude, Zhuge Liang, bowing reverently, took leave of his host, and then went back to his camp.

The recluse dwelt in peace, far away in the vale,
Where the great minister had once subdued the Mans.
Its towering trees, yet unknown to men,
Stands aloft still, clouded in cold mist.

As soon as Zhuge Liang reached camp, he set the men digging for water. But even when they dug to a depth of twenty feet, no water gushed out—nor were they more successful when they tried a dozen other places. The army was really alarmed.

Then Zhuge Liang burned incense and prayed to God in the depth of the night: "I, your unworthy servant Liang, relying on the fortune of the great Han, have come here to subdue the Mans at the order of the Emperor. But 'ere my mission is completed our water is spent and my men and animals are parched with thirst. Should it be your will to preserve the line of the Hans, then I beseech you to bestow us sweet water; but should their course be spent, then may your servant and those with him die in this place!"

The next morning the wells were full of sweet water.

To restore Han he led his men to subdue the Mans.
His prayer was answered by gods for his heart was true.
As the wells gave forth sweet water when Geng Gong's* head bowed full low,
So the reverent night appeals of Kongming made the water flow.

The soldiers' spirits revived with the supply of water, and the army soon advanced by narrow paths to the front of the Valley of the Bald Dragon, where they encamped.

Spies of the Mans soon reported to their king that the springs had lost their power and the men of Shu did not appear to have suffered from miasma or thirst. When he heard of this, Duo Si would not believe it. Together with Meng Huo, he

ascended a high hill to observe their enemy in their camp. They saw no sign of illness or distress among the soldiers, who were carrying water in big or small buckets to cook meals or tend to their horses.

Duo Si's hair stood on end as he looked at them. "These must be heavenly soldiers!" he said, shivering.

"We two brothers will fight to the death with these men of Shu," said Meng Huo. "We would rather die on the battlefield than wait to be put into bonds."

"If your men are defeated my whole family will also perish. Let us slaughter oxen and horses to treat our men. That will encourage them to risk fire and water to make a dash at the enemy camp. Only thus can we hope to win a victory."

So there was great feasting before the Mans took the field. Just as they were ready to set out, there arrived a neighboring chieftain, Yang Feng, who had led an army of 30,000 men to assist them. Meng Huo rejoiced exceedingly at this unexpected support and felt sure of victory. So he and Duo Si went out of their own valley to welcome Yang Feng, who said, "I have with me 30,000 men. All are brave and intrepid warriors, clad in iron mail. They can fly over hills and bounce across ridges, capable to withstand even a million men of Shu. And, moreover, my five sons, all trained in arms, are here with me to help you."

Then he called forth his five sons and told them to bow to the two kings. These were all powerful-looking young fellows. Greatly pleased, Meng Huo entertained the father and sons at

a banquet. Halfway through the feast Yang Feng proposed a diversion.

“There is but scanty amusement in the field,” said Yang Feng. “So I have brought along some native girls, who have been taught to dance with swords and shields. Would you care for it?”

The feasters hailed the suggestion with joy, and soon scores of maidens danced barefooted into the tent from outside, their hair flying about their shoulders. The audience sang and clapped to the rhythm.

Presently at a signal from their father, two of Yang Feng’s sons came forward to fill a cup of wine for Meng Huo and his brother. They took the cups and were raising them to their lips when suddenly Yang Feng shouted his command and, instantly, the two sons pulled the two Mengs out of their seats and seized them. At this, Duo Si jumped up to run away, but Yang Feng gripped him, and he fell prisoner too. The dancing maidens, with their swords and shields, ranged themselves in a line along the front of the tent so that none dared approach.

“When the hare dies the fox mourns; so one does not harm one’s own kind,” said Meng Huo. “We are both chieftains and have never been enemies. Why do you want to injure me?”

“All my family owe our lives to Prime Minister Zhuge Liang and we must repay him for his great kindness to us. Now you are a rebel, so why should I not capture you and offer you to him?”

With the chief rebels captured, the Mans soldiers dispersed, each returning to his own home. Yang Feng then took his prisoners to the camp of Shu, where he bowed to Zhuge Liang and said, “We have captured the Meng brothers as an offering to you in return for your kindness to us.”

Zhuge Liang rewarded Yang Feng handsomely and then ordered Meng Huo to be brought in.

“Are you prepared to yield this time?” he asked.

“It is not your ability, but the betrayal of my own people that has rendered me prisoner. Slay me if you wish, but I will not yield.”

“You tricked my men into entering a land without drinking water, and you further attempted to harm us with the four poisonous springs, yet my soldiers came out safe and sound. Is it not providence? Why do you remain so obstinate?”

Meng Huo replied, “My forefathers have long held the Silver Pit Valley, which are protected by the natural ramparts of three rivers as well as by various strong passes. If you can capture me at that stronghold then I and my heirs will forever be submissive.”

“I am going to release you once more so that you may put your army in order and fight a decisive battle with me. But if you are recaptured and yet remain unsubmissive, I will have to exterminate your whole family.”

He ordered guards to set him free. After he had bowed in gratitude and left, the other two, his brother and Duo Si, were

led in and they also received pardon. In addition they were given wine and food, but they were too afraid even to look the prime minister in the face. They were then given horses to travel back.

To penetrate deep into a land of risks is really hard,
But to win by wonderful strategies is more of a marvel.

Who will win the next battle will be disclosed in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* To die with a grievance.

* Two brothers in the period of Spring and Autumn.

* A general in East Han Dynasty, who maintained a staunch defense against Hun invaders in the first century.

CHAPTER NINETY

Driving off Giant Beasts, Zhuge Liang Scores a Sixth Victory

Rattan Armor Burned, Meng Huo Is Captured for the Seventh Time

At the close of the previous chapter Zhuge Liang released all the prisoners, including Meng Huo. Yang Feng and his sons were rewarded with ranks and his men were given presents. They expressed their gratitude and left. Meng Huo and his men also hastened homeward to Silver Pit Valley.

Outside the valley were three streams, the Lu, the Gannan, and the Xicheng, which converged to form one big river at the city of Sanjiang, or Three Rivers. Close to the valley on the north was a wide and fruitful plain; on the west were salt wells; some two hundred li to the southwest flowed the Lu and the Gannan; and due south was another valley, called Liangtu. There were hills in and around the valley, and among these hills they found silver. Hence, the name Silver Pit.

A palace had been built in the valley, which the Mans kings had made their stronghold. There was also an ancestral temple, which they named Family Spirits, where they held ceremonies to offer sacrifices of oxen and horses during the four seasons. These ceremonies were known as “Inquiring after the Spirits.” Human sacrifices were offered too, often

men of Shu or people from other places. When their own people fell sick, they did not take any medicine but prayed to a sorcerer called the "Medicine Spirit." There was no legal code—instant execution was the punishment for every offense.

When girls matured to womanhood they bathed in a stream. Young men and women mixed and mingled among themselves; they married whomever they would, free from the interference of their parents. They called this "learning the trade." If the climate was good they grew grain, but if the crop failed they made soup out of serpents and boiled the meat of elephants as their staple food. In every district of their land, the head of the most powerful household was named "Chieftain," and the next in importance was called "Senior." Markets were held on the first and the fifteenth days of every month in the city of Sanjiang, where goods were brought in and bartered.

Meng Huo gathered together a thousand or more members of his clan, to whom he addressed: "I have been put to shame by the men of Shu many times, and I have sworn to take revenge for the insults. Have you any proposals to make?"

At this one of them replied, "I would like to recommend a man able to defeat Zhuge Liang."

The assembly turned to the speaker, who was Chieftain Dailai, a brother of Meng Huo's wife.

"Who is this man?" asked Meng Huo, much pleased.

His brother-in-law replied, “He is Mulu, Chieftain of Bana Valley. A master of magic, he can call up the wind and invoke the rain. He rides upon an elephant and is usually attended by tigers, leopards, wolves, venomous snakes, and scorpions. Besides, he has under his command 30,000 brave and superhuman soldiers. You can write a letter and prepare some presents, and I will deliver them to him. If he consents to assist us, what fear will we have of the men of Shu?”

Meng Huo was pleased with the idea and presently sent his brother-inlaw away for the mission. Then he asked Duo Si to defend the city of Three Rivers and make that the first line of defense.

Meanwhile, Zhuge Liang had also arrived near the city. Noting from a distance that the city faced water on all sides save one, he sent Wei Yan and Zhao Yun to attack it by land. But when they reached the rampart they found it well defended by bows and crossbows.

As it happened, the natives were adepts in the use of the bow, and their special kind of bow could discharge at once ten arrows, each with a poisoned head so that a wound meant sure death. The two officers saw that they could not succeed, and so retreated.

When Zhuge Liang heard of the poisoned arrows, he mounted his light chariot and went to see for himself. After he returned to his camp he ordered a retreat of several li. This move delighted the Mans, who congratulated each other on their success in driving off the enemy, who, they concluded, had fled because of fright. So they slept soundly at night, without even posting scouts to keep watch.

The army of Shu maintained a strong defense in their new stockade behind closed gates. For five days Zhuge Liang gave no orders. On the fifth day, toward dusk, a breeze began to rustle. Then Zhuge Liang issued an order that every man should get ready a coat by the first watch. Anyone failing to do so would be put to death. None of the officers knew what was in the wind, but the order was obeyed. Next came the order that each man was to fill his coat with earth. This order appeared equally strange, but it was carried out. When all were ready, Zhuge Liang told them to carry the earth to the foot of the city wall, and the first arrivals would be rewarded. So with their bundles of dry earth they ran as fast as they could to the wall, where they were ordered to stack the earth to construct a terraced path upward. The first man to reach the wall would receive the highest honor.

At this command all the soldiers of the huge army of Shu and the newly-surrendered natives threw their burdens of earth down by the wall. In no time a mound rose in front of the city and, at a signal, the soldiers rushed up the incline, and were soon upon the wall. The Mans archers hastened to shoot but most were instantly seized and dragged down; those who got clear fled from the city. Duo Si was slain in the battle that followed. The defeated men were chased by their opponents in several directions. Thus the city was captured and with it a great booty of treasures, which were given to the army as rewards.

The few soldiers who escaped went to tell Meng Huo what had happened. He was much distressed. And before he had recovered from this shock, news came that the men of Shu had crossed the river and were encamped right in front of his valley.

Just as he was in the very depths of distress, laughter was heard from behind a screen, and a woman appeared, saying, "You're a man, yet you're afraid—I'm only a woman but I'll go out and fight for you."

The woman was his wife, Lady Zhurong. Descended from an ancient imperial house of Zhurong, she was born and bred in the region. She was an expert in hurling daggers and never missed her target.

Meng Huo rose to thank her. She mounted a horse and rode out of the palace, leading hundreds of able officers and a vigorous troop of 50,000 natives to drive off the enemy.

Just as this large force went out of the valley it was stopped by a cohort led by Zhang Ni. At once the Mans spread out on two sides. Lady Zhurong, armed with five daggers in her belt, held an eighteen-foot (five-and-a-half meter) long spear, and rode a curly-haired horse of the Red Hare breed.

At the sight of her Zhang Ni marveled secretly in his heart but he quickly engaged the amazon. After a few passes the lady turned her steed and bolted. Zhang Ni went after her, but a dagger came flying through the air at him. As he tried to fend it off with one hand it deflected and wounded his arm, and he fell to the ground. The Mans, shouting loudly, pounced on the fallen officer and captured him.

Hearing that his comrade had been taken, Ma Zhong rushed out to rescue him, but Zhang Ni was already bound fast. Angrily he made a dash at the woman warrior, but just then his steed went down under him, tripped by a rope, and he was also a prisoner.

Both officers were taken before Meng Huo, who gave a banquet in honor of his wife's success, and during the feast the lady ordered the two prisoners to be put to death. Meng Huo checked her. "Wait," he said. "Five times has Zhuge Liang set me free and it will be unjust to put these two to death. Confine them till we have captured their chief—then we can execute them all."

His wife agreed and they resumed drinking and feasting.

The defeated soldiers returned and told Zhuge Liang the bad news, who immediately took steps to retrieve the setback by sending for Ma Dai, Zhao Yun, and Wei Yan, to each of whom he gave special orders.

The next day the Mans soldiers reported to their king that Zhao Yun was offering a challenge. The lady mounted and rode out to battle. She engaged Zhao Yun, but after a few bouts he fled. The lady was too prudent to risk pursuit and led her men back. Then Wei Yan came up to challenge and he also fled as if defeated. But again the lady declined to pursue. The next day, Zhao Yun repeated his challenge and ran away as before. Still she refused to give chase. But as she was withdrawing, Wei Yan rode up and directed his men to hurl abuse at her. This proved too much, and she indignantly went after him, her spear ready to strike. Wei Yan galloped down a path between the hills. Suddenly a loud noise was heard, and Wei Yan, turning his head, saw the lady tumble from her saddle.

It turned out that she had rushed into an ambush prepared by Ma Dai, and her horse had been tripped by ropes. She was

captured, bound, and carried off to the Shu camp. Her people tried to rescue her, but they were driven off by Zhao Yun.

Zhuge Liang was seated in his tent, when the lady was led up. He at once ordered his men to remove her bonds, and she was conducted to another tent, where wine was served to relieve her of the shock. Then a message was sent to Meng Huo, suggesting an exchange of captives. The king agreed, and the two officers were set free. The lady was escorted back as far as the valley entrance, where Meng Huo received her with mixed feelings of joy and annoyance.

Presently the arrival of Chieftain Mulu of Bana Valley was announced. Meng Huo went out to welcome him and what he saw impressed him immensely. The chieftain, dressed in a silk robe laced with gold pieces and pearls, rode a white elephant and wore two huge swords at his sides. He was followed by a crowd of henchmen who were handlers of a motley pack of fighting animals, including tigers, leopards, jackals, and wolves.

Meng Huo bowed to him repeatedly as he poured out his tale of woes. Mulu promised to avenge his wrongs. Delighted, Meng Huo prepared a rich banquet to entertain his guests.

The next day Mulu led his men out to battle, with his pack of wild creatures in his train. Zhao Yun and Wei Yan quickly deployed. Then taking their positions in front, side-by-side, they observed their opponents. Everything seemed bizarre. Their banners and weapons were all different. The men were ugly and most of them stood stark naked, wearing neither armor nor clothes. Each of them carried four sharp pointed knives. Signals were not given by drum or trumpet, but by a

gong. As they watched, Mulu, who wore two big swords at his sides and carried a hand bell, urged his white elephant forward and emerged from between his flags.

"We've spent all our lives on the battlefield," said Zhao Yun to his comrade, "but never have we seen anyone like this before."

While they were wondering what to make of the sight before them they noticed that their opponent was mumbling some sort of curse and shaking his bell. Suddenly a strong blast swept up, sending stones and sand to whirl in the air like a heavy shower of rain. Next a horn rang out, and at once the tigers, leopards, jackals, wolves, serpents, and all kinds of wild beasts rushed down, baring their fangs and flexing their claws. How could the mortal men of Shu withstand such fearful things as those? So they fled in panic, and the Mans came after them fiercely, chasing them as far as the boundary of the city of Three Rivers.

The two generals mustered their defeated men and went to their leader to confess their failure. Zhuge Liang, however, was not angry but laughed.

"It's not your fault," he said. "Long ago, when I was still home in my cottage, I knew the Mans possessed certain power over wild beasts, and I had prepared against this before our expedition. You will find a score of sealed wagons in the baggage train. We will use half of them now and save the other half for later use."

He told his men to bring forward the ten red wagons, leaving the ten black ones behind. They all wondered what would

happen. Then the wagons were opened, and they turned out to contain carved wild beasts in bright colors, with coats of colorful wool, fangs, and claws of steel. Each such animal could carry ten soldiers. After choosing a thousand seasoned warriors, Zhuge Liang told them to take one hundred of these artificial beasts and stuff their mouths with inflammables.

The next day the men of Shu advanced to the entrance of the valley. The Mans soldiers went into the palace to tell their lord. Mulu, thinking himself invincible, marched out without hesitation, taking Meng Huo with him. Zhuge Liang, dressed in his usual Taoist robe and headdress and carrying his feather fan, went out in his light chariot.

Meng Huo, pointing him out to Mulu, said, "That's Zhuge Liang in that chariot. If we can capture him, victory is ours."

Then Mulu resorted again to muttering his curse and ringing his bell, and instantly the wind began to howl with violence, and the wild beasts came on as before.

But at a wave of Zhuge Liang's feather fan, lo! the wind changed direction and blew instead toward the Mans. In the same breath from the Shu formation there burst forth the carved wild beasts. The real wild beasts of the Mans dared not proceed as they saw rushing down upon them huge creatures whose mouths spurted flames, whose nostrils breathed out black smoke, and who came along, jingling bells and clawing. Frightened, the real beasts turned tail to escape to the valley, trampling numerous Mans down as they sped along.

Zhuge Liang gave the signal for a general offensive and his men rushed forward amidst beating drums and blaring

trumpets. Mulu was killed. Meng Huo's clan abandoned the palace and escaped to the hills. And so the Silver Pit Valley was taken.

The next day, as Zhuge Liang was deploying troops to capture the king, it was announced that Chieftain Dailai, who had tried in vain to persuade the king to yield, had taken into custody Meng Huo and his wife, as well as hundreds of his clan members, to present to the prime minister.

Hearing this, Zhuge Liang summoned two officers and gave them a special order, upon which they hid themselves in the two wings of the tent with a large body of sturdy guards. After that, Zhuge Liang ordered the gates to be opened, and in came the chieftain, followed by executioners bringing Meng Huo and his people. As he bowed at the entrance, Zhuge Liang called out, "Seize them all!" Out jumped the hidden men, every two of them laying hands upon one member of the Mans. All were seized and bound.

"Did you think that paltry trick of yours would deceive me?" said Zhuge Liang. "You were twice captured by your own people and I did not harm you, so you thought I would believe you this time. You came to pretend submission in an attempt to kill me."

Then he told his men to search the prisoners. And truly enough, on every captive was found a sharp knife.

"You promised last time that if you were captured in your home you would yield," said Zhuge Liang. "And now?"

“We have come to court death ourselves. The credit is not yours. I am still not convinced of your ability and I refuse to yield,” replied Meng Huo.

“This is the sixth time I have captured you, and yet you are as obstinate as ever. When will you yield, then?”

“If you seize me yet another time, then I will submit to you and never rebel again.”

“Well, your stronghold is now destroyed. What have I to fear?”

So Zhuge Liang ordered their bonds to be loosened again. “If you are caught a seventh time and if you still refuse to yield, I will certainly not let you off.”

With their hands covering their heads, Meng Huo and his people scuffled off like rats.

The defeated Mans soldiers who had fled during the previous battle were about a thousand, most of them wounded. These fell in with their king, who received them, feeling a little relieved that he had still some men left. Then he sought advice from his brother-in-law.

“Our stronghold is in the hands of the enemy,” said Meng Huo. “Where can we go now?”

His brother-in-law replied, “The only country that can overcome these men is the Wuge country. It lies seven hundred li to the southeast. The chieftain, named Wutugu, is so tall that he is simply a giant. He does not eat grain, but

lives on serpents and venomous beasts. He wears a scaly armor, which is impenetrable to swords or arrows. His men all wear rattan armor. This rattan grows in gullies and ravines, climbing over their rocky walls. The people there cut the rattan stems and steep them in oil for six months. Then they are dried in the sun. When dry, they are soaked again and so on for about a dozen times. Finally, they are plaited into armor. Clad in this the men will not drown when crossing a river, nor get wet in water, nor will their bodies be penetrated by knives or arrows. That is why the soldiers are called the Rattan Army. You can go and seek aid from this chieftain, and if he consents you can seize Zhuge Liang as easily as a sharp knife cleaves a bamboo."

Meng Huo, greatly pleased, went to Wuge to see the chieftain. He noticed that the people there did not live in houses, but dwelt in caves. Meng Huo entered the chieftain's cave and recounted all that had happened to him. The chieftain promised to mobilize his men to avenge him, for which Meng Huo bowed in gratitude. Then the chieftain summoned two of his officers and ordered them to lead 30,000 of the rattan-armored soldiers to march toward the northeast.

This troop came to a stream called the Peach Blossom River. Along the banks grew many peach trees. Year after year the leaves of these trees drifted into the river and rendered it poisonous to all but the natives, whose vigor only doubled after drinking its water. They camped at a shallow area in the river to await the coming of the army of Shu.

Now Zhuge Liang was informed of all this. He at once marched his army to the riverside, where he saw on the

opposite bank the ratten-armored soldiers, who seemed less than human. They looked so hideous. He questioned the natives, and was told that the peach leaves were falling just then and the river water was undrinkable. So he retired five li to encamp, leaving Wei Yan to hold the old camp.

The next day the chieftain of Wuge led his men to cross the stream amid the rolling of drums. Wei Yan went out to meet them. The Mans of Wuge country approached in large numbers, and the place was teeming with them. The men of Shu shot at them but neither arrows nor bolts could penetrate their armor—they just deflected on to the ground. Nor could swords cut or spears pierce. Thus protected, the Mans with their sharp knives and prongs were too much for the men of Shu, who had to retreat. However, they did not pursue but went away. At this Wei Yan and his men turned back and chased as far as the Peach Blossom River, where they watched in disbelief their enemy crossing—some forded with their armor on and others, feeling tired, simply took off their rattan armor, sat upon it, and floated across.

Wei Yan hastened to the main camp to report all this to Zhuge Liang, who summoned Lu Kai and called in some natives to inquire.

Lu Kai said, “I have often heard that among the Mans there is this Wuge country, which is a land of barbarians, the people having no notion of human relations as they are understood in our state. They are protected by their rattan armor and hence difficult to overcome. Besides, there is this evil Peach Blossom River, which revives the vigor of the natives but kills outsiders after drinking its water. A place like this is not

worth conquering. Even if we win a complete victory, it is of no use. I think we would do better to return home."

Zhuge Liang said, smiling, "Well, we have had too much difficulty in getting here to go back so easily. I will draw up plans to subdue these people tomorrow."

Then he told Zhao Yun to help Wei Yan hold the camp and not to go out to fight.

On the following day, Zhuge Liang went out in his light chariot to reconnoiter with a few natives as guides. He came to some secluded hills near the north bank of the river, where he surveyed the terrain. Where the paths were too rugged for any carriage to pass, he would alight and went afoot. Presently he came to a hill from which he saw a long winding valley, like a huge serpent, fringed on all sides by bare and precipitous cliffs. In the middle ran a wide road.

"What is the name of this valley?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"It is called Coiled Serpent Valley," said the guides. "At the other end is the high road to the city of the Three Rivers. In front of the valley is a place called Talangdian."

"Splendid," cried Zhuge Liang in joy. "It is Heaven's wish that I should succeed here!"

Having found what he was looking for, he retraced his steps, ascended his chariot, and returned to camp. There he first called in Ma Dai and put him in charge of the preparations. He told him to take the ten black wagons and get a thousand long bamboo poles ready for use. He told his officers in

confidence what the wagons contained and what was to be done with the contents. “Then take your own troops to hold the two ends of the valley,” added Zhuge Liang. “I will give you half a month to carry out all this. Remember to maintain strictest secrecy. Any leakage will be punished by military law.”

Next, Zhao Yun was ordered to get to the other end of the valley, with instructions as to how to hold the road that led to the city of Three Rivers. Then Wei Yan was sent to camp at the ford of the Peach Blossom River. If the Mans crossed over the river to challenge he was to abandon the camp and flee toward a certain white flag that he would see ahead of him. “In half a month you are to lose fifteen times and abandon seven camps,” concluded his chief. “On no account are you to come back earlier and see me, not even after you have lost fourteen battles.”

Wei Yan accepted the order, though not a little upset at the prospect, and went away sulkily. When he’d left, Zhang Yi was summoned and was sent to make a stockade at a certain point; lastly Zhang Ni and Ma Zhong were told to lead the thousand or so surrendered Mans to perform a secret task. All of them went away to implement Zhuge Liang’s plan.

In his camp Meng Huo said to the chieftain of Wuge, “Although this Zhuge Liang is exceedingly crafty, ambush is his favorite ruse. So in later battles you should warn your soldiers not to enter a valley where the trees are thick.”

“You’re right,” said the chieftain. “I know now that the men of the central state are full of wiles, and I will see that your

advice is followed. I will go in front to fight while you remain in the rear to instruct me."

Presently scouts told them of the encampment of the men of Shu on the north bank of the Peach Blossom River. The chieftain sent his two officers with the rattan-armored men to cross the river and engage them. The two sides met, but Wei Yan soon left the field. The Mans did not pursue, as they dreaded an ambush.

Then Wei Yan established another camp and the Mans crossed the river again to fight. Wei Yan came out to meet them, but once more he fled after a very short encounter. This time the Mans pursued a dozen li, and, finding nothing suspicious all around, they occupied the deserted Shu camp.

The next day the two officers asked their chieftain to come to the camp and reported to him the success of their battles. He decided to make a general advance to chase the enemy. Wei Yan and his men hurriedly escaped, even casting aside their armor and throwing away their spears. In their flight they spotted a white flag ahead and, hastening toward it, they found a camp already made, and they occupied it.

Soon, however, the pursuers came near, and as they pressed forward Wei Yan abandoned this camp and flew again. When the Mans reached the new camp they took up quarters there.

The next day the Mans resumed the pursuit. This time Wei Yan turned back to fight but after only three encounters he went off again toward another white flag in the distance. There, another camp awaited him and he settled into it with his men.

To avoid wearisome repetition, it may be said that this chase-and-flee continued daily until the men of Shu had been defeated fifteen times and had abandoned seven camps. The Mans now pressed on triumphantly with all their might, with the chieftain in the forefront. Whenever he came to a thicket he would order his men to halt. Then scouts would be sent to look from a distance and, true to his expectations, flags would be discovered fluttering amid sheltering trees.

"Just as you predicted," said the chieftain to Meng Huo.

The king laughed heartily. "Now I have seen through Zhuge Liang's ruses! He is going to be worsted this time. You have won fifteen successive victories and seized seven camps these days. On hearing your approach his men simply ran off. Apparently, he has exhausted all his tricks. With your next offensive the victory is secured."

The chieftain, greatly flattered, forgot all about taking precautions against his enemy.

The sixteenth day found Wei Yan and his often-defeated men confronting his rattan-protected foes. The chieftain, riding his white elephant, was ahead of his men. He wore a cap with designs of the sun and moon and streamers of wolf's beard, a garment tasseled with gold pieces and pearls, which allowed his armor of scales to appear under his armpits; his eyes seemed to flash fire. Pointing scornfully at Wei Yan, he began to revile him.

Once again, Wei Yan whipped up his steed and fled. Behind him came the Mans, pressing on in hot pursuit. Wei Yan led his men into the Coiled Serpent Valley and then pushed past

it toward another white flag ahead. The chieftain followed in haste, and as he saw only bare hills without any sign of vegetation all around, he felt quite sure that no ambush could be laid there.

So he advanced into the valley. There he saw some black wagons in the road. His soldiers reported that these must be their enemy's supply wagons, abandoned in their hasty flight. This pleased the chieftain even more and he urged his men to pursue at a faster speed. However, as they came near the other end of the valley, Wei Yan and his men had disappeared, but big logs and large boulders were rolling down the hillside, closing the exit of the valley. The chieftain ordered his men to clear away the obstacles. Before they had done so, they suddenly saw in front of them some big and small carts, laden with firewood, all burning. The chieftain hastened to order retreat. But at that instant shouting arose behind, and soon he was told that the entrance of the valley had also been blocked by dry wood. The black wagons turned out to contain nothing but gunpowder, and they were all on fire. However, seeing that the valley was devoid of grass and wood, the chieftain was still not too alarmed, but ordered his men to search for a way out.

Then he saw torches being hurled down the mountain sides. When these torches touched the ground, they ignited the fuses leading to the hidden mines beneath the sandy earth. Then the whole valley suddenly heaved with loud explosions and was lit by dancing flames, which darted in all directions. Wherever the flames came into contact with rattan armor the rattan caught fire, and thus the chieftain and his whole army died huddled together in the Coiled Serpent Valley.

From a hilltop Zhuge Liang glanced down and saw the Mans struggling desperately in the fire. Most of them had their heads or faces mangled by the explosions of the mines. The whole valley stank with the corpses.

Zhuge Liang's tears fell as he sighed, saying, "Though I have rendered a good service to my country, yet my life is bound to be shortened for this."

His words brought deep sighs from the officers and men with him.

Meanwhile, Meng Huo was in his camp, anxiously waiting for news of the battle, when there came a crowd of about a thousand of his former soldiers, who knelt before him and said cheerfully, "The Wuge chieftain has fought a great battle with the men of Shu and has surrounded Zhuge Liang in the Valley of the Coiled Serpent. But the chieftain needs reinforcements and we have come to seek your help. All of us were formerly your own people but were forced to yield to Shu. When we learned of your return, however, we hastened to come back to your service."

Meng Huo was beside himself with joy at the good news. Placing himself at the head of his clansmen, he lost no time in setting out, with the harbingers of the happy news in the lead. But when he reached the valley he was greeted by the raging fire and the smell of death. He knew he had been tricked again. As he hastened to retreat there appeared two bodies of enemy troops at his sides, and they attacked at once. He tried to make whatever stand he could but a great shouting arose among his own men, who revealed themselves as men of Shu

in disguise, and they quickly captured all his clansmen and followers.

Only Meng Huo broke through and escaped into the hills. As he galloped along he suddenly saw, emerging from a valley, a group of horsemen accompanying a small carriage, and therein sat Zhuge Liang, dressed in his Taoist robe and holding a feather fan.

"Meng Huo, you rebel!" cried Zhuge Liang. "What about this time?"

Meng Huo immediately turned to run away, but out dashed an officer from his side to block his path. It was Ma Dai. Meng Huo, caught unawares, fell a prey to his captor. His wife, Lady Zhurong, and the other members of his family were also taken.

Back in camp, Zhuge Liang assembled his officers in the main tent. He was still sad at the thought of the great killing and he said, "This plan that I used was against my best feeling. For this sin I will have to pay dearly."

Then he went on to explain the plan he had employed to overcome the Mans. "I guessed that the enemy would suspect an ambush in every thicket, so I had flags set up in the woods to arouse their suspicion, but actually I posted no troops there. I told Wei Yan to lose battle after battle in order to lead them on and harden their hearts for pursuit. When I saw the Valley of the Coiled Serpent, with its sandy soil, treeless walls of sheer rock, and the wide road in the middle, I recognized what could be done. I sent Ma Dai to place there the black wagons, in which I had put fire bombs called 'mines',

designed long ago for this purpose. In every bomb was hidden nine more bombs, and they were buried thirty paces apart in the valley. They were connected by fuses concealed in hollowed bamboo poles to set off successive explosions, and their destructive power was enormous. Once ignited, they would wreck hills and smash rocks. I also told Zhao Yun to prepare carts laden with firewood to be put at both ends of the valley and to prepare big logs and boulders. While all this was being arranged, Wei Yan led the chieftain on and on till he had enticed him into the valley. After Wei Yan had safely left the valley, its entrance and exit were sealed and the burning began. I decided to employ fire because I know what is proof against water cannot stand fire. And the oil-soaked rattan armor, excellent as a protection against swords and arrows, was highly inflammable material, catching fire easily. The Mans were so stubborn that the only way was to use fire, or we should never have scored a victory. But it is my great sin to wipe out the entire race of Wuge country."

After hearing his explanation, the officers bowed to him and praised his wonderful ability, which was unfathomable even to gods and spirits.

Then Meng Huo was summoned. He fell upon his knees at the entrance of the tent. Zhuge Liang ordered him to be freed from his bonds and taken to another tent for some refreshments. However, Zhuge Liang gave secret orders to the officer in charge of food and drinks.

While Meng Huo and his family and clan members were treated with wine in another tent, a man suddenly came in and addressed the captive king: "The prime minister is too embarrassed to see you again, sir. He has sent me to release

you. You may return and assemble another army and once more attempt a decisive victory. Now you may leave."

But instead of going Meng Huo began to weep.

"Seven times a captive and seven times released!" said the king of the Mans. "Never has such a thing happened before in the whole world. Though I am ignorant of the imperial grace, I am not entirely devoid of a sense of propriety and rectitude. Does he think I can be so shameless?"

Then the king and his people crawled to Zhuge Liang's tent, where he bared the upper part of his body and begged pardon, saying, "Oh, most powerful minister, we men of the south will never rebel again."

"Then you will yield?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"I and my descendants will forever be indebted to you for preserving our lives. How can we not yield?"

At this long-awaited pledge Zhuge Liang asked Meng Huo to come up into the tent, where a banquet was soon given to celebrate the occasion. Then he confirmed Meng Huo's perpetual leadership in the region and returned to him all the territories that had been seized by the men of Shu. The Mans were all overwhelmed by Zhuge Liang's generosity, and they went away leaping with joy.

A poem was written by a later poet to praise Zhuge Liang:

He rode in his Taoist garb,
In his hand a feather fan.

Seven times he freed the Mans king
As part of his conquering plan.
To this day his prestige reigned
O'er streams and valleys of the south.
Lest his kindness should e'er be forgot,
The vanquished erected a fane.

This generous treatment of the Mans was hardly comprehensible to his subordinates and a senior official named Fei Yi ventured to remonstrate with Zhuge Liang on his policy.

"You, sir, have personally led the army to make this long journey into the wilds and have conquered the Mans' country. Now that the Mans king has submitted, why not appoint Shu officials to share in the administration and hold the land together with him?"

Zhuge Liang replied, "There are three difficulties. First, to leave our men here entails leaving an army with them; and there is also the difficulty of feeding the soldiers. Secondly, the Mans families are broken and their fathers and brothers have died in the war. To leave our officials here without soldiers invites trouble sooner or later; this is the second difficulty. Thirdly, the Mans have a history of deposing or murdering their rulers. They are suspicious even of each other, let alone of outsiders, and our men will never be trusted; this is the third difficulty. Now I leave no men behind, so I need not send any supplies here. Peace will be maintained between our two sides."

His words convinced Fei Yi and the others of the wisdom of the policy.

The kindness of the conqueror was rewarded by the gratitude of the conquered, who even erected a shrine in his honor, where they offered sacrifices at the four seasons. They called Zhuge Liang their “Gracious Father” and they sent gifts of pearls, cinnabar, lacquer, medicine, cattle, and battle chargers for the use of the army. And they pledged themselves never to rebel.

After the feasts were over, the army marched homeward to Shu. Wei Yan led the way. As he reached the Lu River, dark clouds suddenly gathered in the sky and a violent wind began to howl, sending sand and stones whirling in the air. The army was forced to turn back. Wei Yan reported the matter to Zhuge Liang, who called in Meng Huo to ask him what this might mean.

The Mans of the south have yielded now at last,
Ghosts in the water won’t let our men go past.

Meng Huo’s explanation will be related in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-ONE

Zhuge Liang Offers Sacrifices at the Lu River and Leads His Army Homeward

The Marquis of Wu Proposes an Attack on Wei in His Memorial

As Zhuge Liang was leading his army homeward, Meng Huo, at the head of the Mans chieftains and leaders of various tribes, came to see him off. They lined the roadside and bowed to him in obeisance. In the meantime, the vanguard led by Wei Yan had reached the Lu River. It was the ninth month of the year and the season was fall. They were trying to cross the river when a tremendous storm swept up, hindering the army from advancing. When he learned of this, Zhuge Liang asked Meng Huo if he knew of any reason for such a storm.

Meng Huo replied, “Wild spirits have always troubled this water and those who want to cross have to propitiate them with sacrifices.”

“What sacrifices should be offered?” asked Zhuge Liang.

“In the old days when malicious spirits brought misfortune, our tradition was to sacrifice men to the number of seven times seven—forty-nine in all—and offer their heads, besides slaying a black ox and a white goat. Only then would the

wind subside, the waters come to rest, and bounteous harvests follow year after year."

"The war is over and peace has returned," said Zhuge Liang. "How can I slay a single innocent man?"

Then he went down to the river to see for himself. Truly enough, a ghostly wind was howling and the waves were surging. Both men and horses were frightened. Much perplexed, he sought out some natives to inquire. They told him that they had heard moanings and cries from dusk to dawn every night since his army had passed the river. There were numerous spirits in the fog and no man dared cross the river.

"It is my sin," said Zhuge Liang. "Earlier more than a thousand of Ma Dai's men perished in these waters, and later the bodies of the slain Mans soldiers were also thrown here. These poor grievous souls are not yet freed. Tonight I myself will go and propitiate them."

"You have to abide by the old custom and offer forty-nine human heads—then the spirits will disperse," said the natives.

Zhuge Liang objected: "The cause of this is the unfortunate deaths of innocent men. What is the sense in slaying more men? But I know what to do."

He told the army cooks to slaughter an ox and a horse and to make balls of flour paste after the manner of human heads, stuffed with the meat of oxen and goats. These, called man-tou, or buns, would be used instead of human heads.

By nightfall, an altar had been set up on the bank of the river with the sacrificial objects all arranged. Forty-nine lamps were lit and banners were hoisted high to summon the souls. The forty-nine man-tou were piled up on the ground. At midnight Zhuge Liang, in a white robe and golden head-dress, went to offer the sacrifice in person, and he bade Dong Jue read this prayer:

> On the first day of the ninth month of the third year of the period Jian-Xing of the Han* Dynasty, I, Zhuge Liang, Prime Minister of Han, Marquis of Wuxiang, Governor of Yizhou, reverently order this sacrifice to appease the shadows of those men of Shu who have died in their country's service and those of the southern men who have perished in this war.
>
> Hear me out, ye shades.
>
> The Emperor of the mighty Han Dynasty excels the five feudal lords in power and succeeds the three ancient kings in wisdom. Recently, when barbarians of the distant south, who loosed the venom of their sorcery and gave free rein to their wolfish hearts of rebellion, sent an army to invade his territory, I was commanded to punish their crimes. Therefore I led my mighty army to this wild land to destroy those mere ants of rebels. As my brave soldiers gathered in multitudes, the unruly rebels melted away. Like apes, they escaped on hearing the mere crack of a bamboo.

My men are warriors from the nine provinces and my officers, heroes of the empire. All of them have perfected their skills in the use of arms and joined my forces to serve under a wise king. They obeyed orders and carried out the plans for the seven captures of Meng Huo. They were true to their country and loyal to their lord.

But who could have foreseen that you, poor spirits, would fall victims to the enemy's wicked wiles, due to mishaps in the strategy? Some of you went down to the deep springs wounded by flying arrows; others sank into the long night hurt by lethal weapons. Alive you were valorous; dead, you are remembered as heroes. Now we are returning home in victory and the prisoners are being handed over to our lord. Since your noble souls still exist, I presume you will hear my words. So follow the banners of my army, come after my men, and return with us to your country, each to his own village, where you may enjoy the savor of your own flesh and blood and receive the offerings of your own families. Do not become wandering ghosts in alien hamlets or restless shades on foreign soil. I will make a petition to His Majesty that your families enjoy his gracious bounty, with yearly allowances of grain and clothing and monthly payments of salaries for sustenance, so that you may rest in peace.

As for you, spirits of this place, shades of the deceased men of the south, you are not far from home and can enjoy the regular offerings of your people. Those who are alive are in awe of the

heavenly majesty, and as dead ones you must also submit to the imperial rule. So hold your peace and refrain from uttering unseemly moanings. To show my sincerity of heart I reverently offer you sacrifices and implore you to accept them.

Alas, ye dead! To you this offering!

At the end of the prayer Zhuge Liang, overcome with emotion, broke into loud wailing, and the whole army was moved to tears. Meng Huo and his followers also moaned and wept. Then amid the sad clouds and angry mists they saw, vaguely, thousands of ghosts dispersing with the wind. Then the material portion of the sacrifice was thrown into the river.

The next day Zhuge Liang led his army to the south bank of the river, where he saw the clouds had lifted and the winds had hushed; and the crossing was made without further mishap. The men of Shu began their triumphant journey homeward. It was a magnificent sight, which was aptly expressed in the following two lines:

Stirrups jingle at the crack of whips,
Men return amid songs of victory.

At Yongchang, Lu Kai and another official were left behind to take command of the four districts, and Meng Huo and his men were permitted to return home. Zhuge Liang urged the Mans king to be diligent in his administration, maintain good control over his subordinates, care for his people, and never to neglect farming. Meng Huo wept as he bowed and took his leave.

When the army neared the capital, the Second Ruler rode out thirty li in his imperial carriage to welcome his victorious minister. The Emperor stood by the roadside as he waited for his arrival.

Zhuge Liang quickly descended from his chariot, prostrated himself, and said, “It is my fault to cause Your Majesty much anxiety for failing to conquer the south swiftly.”

His lord helped him to his feet and returned with him to Chengdu, their chariots riding side by side. Back in the capital, there was great rejoicing with banquets and rich rewards for the army. Henceforward distant lands, to the number of over two hundred, sent tribute to the Shu court. With the Emperor’s permission Zhuge Liang saw to it that the families of those who had lost their lives in the expedition were well taken care of. So all were appeased and the whole land enjoyed tranquillity.

Meanwhile, in the kingdom of Wei, Cao Pi had ruled for seven years. Cao Pi had first married a lady of the Zhen family, formerly wife of the second son of Yuan Shao. He had discovered her at the fall of Yecheng. She bore him a son, Rui, who had been an intelligent boy since early childhood and a great favorite with his father. Later, Cao Pi took as his gui fei (concubine) a daughter of the Guo family, a lady of exceeding beauty. Her father once said that she was “queen of all women,” and she styled herself with the title. With her arrival, Lady Zhen fell from her lord’s favor, but Lady Guo’s ambition soon led her to intrigue to replace Lady Zhen and set herself up as Empress. She took Zhang Tao, a minister at the court, into her confidence.

One day Cao Pi happened to feel indisposed, and Zhang Tao made up a story to the effect that he had dug up in the palace of Lady Zhen a wooden image on which was written the king's date of birth, so as to harm him.* In his anger, Cao Pi put his consort to death and set up Lady Guo in her place.

But she had no children of her own. Therefore she nourished Rui as if he were hers. However, loved as Rui was, he was not then named heir. When he was fifteen Rui, already an expert archer and a daring rider, accompanied his father on a hunting expedition. In a valley, they startled a doe and its fawn. Cao Pi shot the doe, and the fawn fled. Seeing that the fawn was running in front of his son's horse, Cao Pi called out to him to shoot it. Instead the youth burst into tears.

"Your Majesty has slain the mother—how can I bear to kill the child as well?"

Hearing these words, Cao Pi threw down his bow and said, "My son, you would indeed make a benevolent and virtuous ruler."

This incident helped Cao Pi make up his mind to confer on Rui the title of Prince of Pingyuan. In the fifth month Cao Pi fell ill with colds, and medical treatment was of no avail. So three chief generals were summoned to his bedside. They were Cao Zhen, Chen Qun, and Sima Yi. When they had come, the Emperor's son, Cao Rui, was also called in, and the dying ruler said: "I am grievously ill, and my end is near. I confide to your good care and guidance this son of mine. You must support him and do not fail to live up to my trust in you."

“Why does Your Majesty say such words?” they replied in alarm. “We will do our utmost to serve you for a thousand falls and a myriad years.”

Cao Pi said, “This year the city gates suddenly collapsed for no apparent reasons. That was an ill omen, and I knew then I was about to die.”

At that moment attendants came in to announce the arrival of Cao Xiu, another high-ranking general, who had come to ask after his lord’s health. When he was called into the chamber, Cao Pi said to him: “You and these three are the pillars and cornerstones of the state. If you will work together with one mind and uphold my son’s authority, I can close my eyes in peace.”

These were his last words. A flood of tears gushed forth, and he sank back on the couch, dead. He was forty years of age and had reigned for seven years.

The four ministers raised the wailing for the dead and forthwith busied themselves with setting up Cao Rui as Emperor of Wei. The late Emperor received the posthumous title of “Emperor Wen.” The late Empress, Lady Zhen, mother of the new Emperor, was given the title of “Empress Wen-Zhao.”

Honors were then distributed in celebration of the new reign. Sima Yi and six others were given the highest positions, while the rest of the civil and military officials were also promoted. A general amnesty was declared throughout the land.

At that time the two western districts of Yong and Liang lacked a commander to defend them. Sima Yi offered himself for the post in a memorial to the new Emperor and was appointed chief of the forces in these regions. Soon he left to take up his new office.

In due time news of all this reached Zhuge Liang, who became greatly perturbed. His anxiety was not about the death of Cao Pi and the succession of his son, but about Sima Yi, whom he knew was very crafty and whose new position as commander of the forces might pose a serious threat to Shu. He felt that he should attack Sima Yi before the latter was able to train his army.

Ma Su said, "You, sir, have just returned from an arduous and exhausting expedition, and should take time to recuperate your men and horses before launching another military campaign. However, I have a scheme to make Cao Rui bring about the destruction of Sima Yi. May I lay it before you?"

"What is your plan?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"Although Sima Yi is an important minister of Wei, he is not really trusted by the new king. We can send someone secretly to Luoyang and Yejun to disseminate rumors that Sima Yi is intending to rebel. In addition, we can fabricate a proclamation to the whole country in his name and post it up at various places so as to arouse Cao Rui's suspicion of him, and he will surely put Sima Yi to death."

Zhuge Liang adopted the plan.

Away in Yecheng, one day a notice suddenly appeared on the city gate. The wardens of the gate took it down and presented it before Cao Rui. This is what it said:

"I, Sima Yi, General of Cavalry, Commander of the forces of Yong and Liang, proclaim to the world in the name of faith and justice: The late Emperor Wu (Cao Cao), who founded Wei Dynasty, formerly intended to set up Prince of Chen Si (Cao Zhi) as his successor. Unfortunately, calumny spread abroad, and the rightful heir has been a dragon held in confinement for many years. His grandson, Cao Rui, who has never followed a virtuous course, has assumed the highest place against the unfulfilled wishes of the founder of our dynasty. Now I, in accordance with the will of Heaven and the desires of the people, have decided on the day to set my army in motion. When that day arrives I call upon each one of you to pledge loyalty to your new lord. Whoever dares to disobey will suffer the complete destruction of his clan. You are hereby informed that you may all know how to act."

After reading it the young Emperor turned pale with fright and he hastened to call a council of his ministers for advice.

Hua Xin said, "That was the reason why he requested the governorship of Yong and Liang. I remember the late Emperor Wu once saying to me, 'Sima Yi has the eyes of an eagle and the glances of a wolf. He should not be entrusted with military power lest he harm the state. Now his rebellious spirit is burgeoning. Your Majesty must put him to death without delay."

Wang Lang supported this view. "Sima Yi is an expert in military strategies and tactics. He has always cherished great

ambitions and would cause trouble if he were not put down at once."

Following their proposal, Cao Rui decided to issue an edict, intending to lead an army himself to punish the rebellious minister. Suddenly Cao Zhen stood forth and objected: "No, this will not do. Your father, the late Emperor, confided the care of Your Majesty to us four (of whom Sima Yi was one) because he trusted Sima Yi for his loyalty. So far it is not certain what has really happened. If you hastily send an army to repress him, you may force him into rebellion. This may well be one of the tricks of Shu or Wu to cause dissension in our midst, so that an opportunity can be found to further their own schemes. Pray reflect upon this before you act."

"But if Sima Yi does contemplate a revolt, what then?" asked Cao Rui.

Cao Zhen replied, "If Your Majesty suspects him, you can do as the founder of Han once did when he made that deceitful trip to Yunmeng. You can go to Anyi and Sima Yi will assuredly come out to meet you. Then if you find anything suspicious with his movements, you can arrest him right in front of your carriage."

Cao Rui agreed. Leaving Cao Zhen to administer state affairs, the young Emperor personally led the Imperial Guard, to the number of 100,000 men, and traveled to Anyi. Ignorant of the reason of his coming and anxious to show off his military authority, Sima Yi went to welcome his lord with all the pomp of the commander of a great army. As he approached with his large force of several hundred thousand men, the courtiers said to the Emperor that Sima Yi's arrival with such

a huge army could only mean that he intended to rebel. The Emperor hastened to order Cao Xiu out with his men to resist him. Seeing the approach of an army, Sima Yi knelt by the roadside, thinking that the Emperor had come in person.

Cao Xiu advanced and said, "Chong-da,* the late Emperor entrusted you with the heavy responsibility of caring for his heir; why do you rebel?"

Startled, Sima Yi turned pale and broke out in a cold sweat as he asked the reason for such a charge. Cao Xiu told him what had occurred.

"This is a vile plot of our enemies in Wu and Shu to set our lord and his minister at each other's throat so that they might get a chance to attack us," he said. "I must see the Son of Heaven and explain."

Ordering his army to withdraw, he went forth alone to the Emperor's chariot, where he bowed low and said in tears: "I am entrusted by the late Emperor to care for the welfare of Your Majesty. How dare I ever betray his trust? This must be the plot of our enemy. Pray let me lead an army to destroy Shu first and then to attack Wu, and so show my gratitude to the late Emperor and Your Majesty and manifest my own true heart."

Cao Rui hesitated, unable to make a decision. Then Hua Xin intervened: "In any case deprive him of his military power and let him go into retirement."

And thus it was decided. Sima Yi was stripped of his office and retired to his native village. Cao Xiu succeeded him as

commander of the forces of Yong and Liang, and Cao Rui returned to Luoyang.

Zhuge Liang rejoiced when spies brought news of the success of this ruse.

“Sima Yi and the forces he commanded in Yong and Liang have been the obstacles in my long-awaited attack on Wei. Now that he has fallen I have no more anxiety.”

The next day at the great assembly of officials in court, Zhuge Liang presented a memorial for the expedition he proposed.

“Your humble servant Liang has this to say: The late Emperor died in the middle of accomplishing his noble task of restoring the rule of Han. At present the empire is divided into three parts. As our country is weak, it faces the most critical issue of survival. Still, in court our officials are not remiss in their duty, and on the battlefield loyal and devoted soldiers sacrifice their lives, for they remember the special kindness of the late Emperor and wish to show their gratitude to him by rendering their service to Your Majesty. Therefore it would indeed be fitting for Your Majesty to extend your holy influence to glorify the memory of the late Emperor’s virtue and strengthen the morale of your heroic officers, but not to debase yourself by following unrighteous instructions and so preventing remonstrance from honest men.

“The palace of the emperor and the office of the prime minister are of one administrative body and hence there must be one law governing the reward of the good and the punishment of the evil. Any evil doers and lawbreakers, as are those true and good souls, should be relegated to the officials

in concern and be given what they deserve in order to manifest Your Majesty's just and enlightened administration. Injustice is wrong, as is one law for the court and another for the government.

"The palace officials Guo You-zhi, Fei Yi, and Dong Yun are all honest men, loyal to the last degree. Therefore the late Emperor chose them to serve Your Majesty. My humble advice is to consult them in all palace matters, great or small, before taking any actions. That will be the sure means to correct errors and reap enormous advantages.

"General Xiang Chong is a man of fairness and well-balanced temperament, highly-versed in military matters, to whom, after observing him in previous battles, the late Emperor applied the epithet 'capable.' That is why there is a consensus of opinion that he should be made commander of Imperial Guard. My humble advice is to consult him in all military matters, great or small, whereby harmony will surely prevail in your military forces and each man will be used according to his ability.

"Keep company with worthy officials but stay away from vile flatterers. This policy enabled the Former Han (West Han) to prosper, while its reversal ruined the Latter Han (East Han). Every time the late Emperor discussed this with me, he would sigh and condemn the misconduct of Emperors Huan and Ling.

"The palace attendants Guo You-zhi, Fei Yi and court ministers Chen Zhen, Zhang Yi, and Jiang Wan are all men of incorruptible character, who will remain loyal to death. I pray that Your Majesty will stay close to them and hold them in

confidence. Then the day will soon come when the House of Han is restored.

"I was originally but a commoner, a farmer in Nanyang, concerned only to secure my own safety in a troubled age and not interested in seeking a career among the contending nobles. The late Emperor, overlooking my inferior origin, condescended to seek me thrice in my humble cottage and consult me on the events of the time. Moved by his magnanimity, I consented to enter his service. Then came the invasion, and I took office at a moment of darkest outlook and severest danger. Now twenty-one years have elapsed. The late Emperor knew of my discretion, and on his deathbed he confided his grand mission to me. Since then, I have spent my days and nights in anxiety lest I should fail in my trust and so dim his glory. That is why I undertook the expedition in the fifth month to the wasteland of the deep south beyond the Lu River. Now the south is quelled, and our supply of arms sufficiently prepared. The time has come for me to lead the army to conquer the north. However incapable I am, I will do my utmost to remove the wicked and the vicious, restore the House of Han, and reestablish it in the old capital. This is my duty out of gratitude to the late Emperor and from loyalty to Your Majesty. As to weighing the pros and cons of every matter and submitting sound advice, the duty lies with Guo You-zhi, Fei Yi, and Dong Yun.

"I hope Your Majesty will delegate to me the task of repelling the rebels and restoring the Hans. Should I fail, then punish me for my fault and inform the spirit of the late Emperor. Should the three courtiers fail to advise you on the great task of restoration, then condemn them for their negligence.

"Your Majesty must also rely on your own wisdom to seek the right course and follow the correct counsel. Always bear in mind the late Emperor's testament. How grateful I will be if Your Majesty will favor me by acting on my advice!

"Now I am about to depart on a distant expedition. Tears rise to my eyes as I prepare this memorial and scarcely do I know what I have written."

After reading it through, the Emperor said, "My Father-Minister, you have only just returned from the fatiguing expedition to the south, and are hardly rested. I fear this march to the north will be too tiring for you."

Zhuge Liang replied, "Since I received the late Emperor's commission to take care of Your Majesty's well-being, I have never slackened my efforts for a single day or night. The south being pacified, there is no danger of trouble inside the country. What better time than this to destroy the rebels and recover the northern territory?"

From the ranks of courtiers stood forth Qiao Zhou, who said: "I have been studying the aspect of the stars and I find that the northern quarter is exceptionally bright and strong. This is not the time to attack it." Then turning to Zhuge Liang, he continued, "You, sir, understand very well the mysteries of the stars. Why do you try to oppose the forces of nature?"

"Heavenly courses are prone to changes," replied Zhuge Liang. "It is wrong to accept one interpretation. I will first station my army in Hanzhong, where I will keep a close watch over the enemy's movements and then act accordingly."

Despite Qiao Zhou's earnest pleadings, Zhuge Liang was determined to embark on the expedition. So Guo You-zhi, Dong Yun, and Fei Yi were ordered to attend to matters in the palace, while Xiang Chong was appointed commander of the Imperial Guard. Jiang Wan and Zhang Ni were entrusted with the administrative affairs of the prime minister. Ten others were also given special appointments. Altogether, over a hundred officials were appointed to administer Shu in the absence of Zhuge Liang.

After receiving the Emperor's edict, Zhuge Liang returned to his residence and summoned the officers to listen to his orders. They all came, and to each was assigned a task in the great army of Zhuge Liang, Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Expedition, Prime Minister of Shu, Marquis of Wuxiang, Governor of Yizhou, and Director of Internal and External Affairs. At the same time a message was dispatched to Li Yan and his colleague, urging them to guard the border areas of Shu against Wu.

All being ready, the day of bing-yin (fourth day) in the third month of the fifth year of Jian Xing was chosen for the army to depart.

Suddenly there came forward a veteran general who cried out angrily: "Old I may be, yet I still have the valor of Lian Po and the heroism of Ma Yuan. These two ancient warriors never acknowledged their old age—why am I considered useless?"

It was Zhao Yun.

Zhuge Liang said, “Since I returned from the south, Ma Chao has died of illness and I feel as if I have lost a limb. Now, general, you are advanced in years. Any slight lapse would not only shake your reputation, but might also affect the morale of the whole army.”

Zhao Yun replied sternly: “From the day I first joined the late Emperor, I have never quailed in battle but have always pressed to the front to face the enemy. It is something to rejoice for a true warrior to die on the battlefield. Do you think I will regret it? Let me lead the van, I pray.”

Zhuge Liang tried his best to dissuade the veteran, but in vain. Zhao Yun was set on it, even threatening suicide there and then if his demand was not met. At last Zhuge Liang yielded on the condition that he would accept a comrade to accompany him.

At this Deng Zhi at once volunteered, “Incapable as I am, I will assist General Zhao and lead the van to destroy the enemy.”

Delighted, Zhuge Liang assigned 5,000 veterans for the vanguard, and with them went ten lesser officers.

After the vanguard had set out, the main body also started its march. The Emperor, accompanied by his whole court, went to see his minister off. The farewell was taken ten li ahead of the north gate, in the face of the grand army, its banners and pennons covering the entire field and its spears and swords standing like a forest. Then Zhuge Liang bade farewell to the Emperor and the army took the road to Hanzhong.

Naturally, this movement was duly reported in Luoyang. That day the young Emperor of Wei, Cao Rui, was meeting his officials in court when a minister stepped forth and said: "A report has just come in from the borders saying that Zhuge Liang has led an army of more than 300,000 men into Hanzhong. Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi are leading the vanguard."

This alarmed the Emperor of Wei, who asked his officials if any of them would lead an army to repel the enemy's advance. At once one man stood out, crying, "My father died in Hanzhong, and to my bitter regret his death is unavenged. I will go and destroy the enemy with my own fierce troops and I hope Your Majesty will also allow me to command the forces of the west. Besides avenging my father, I will render a service to the state. I will not flinch even if I have to die a myriad deaths."

The speaker was Xiahou Mao, son of Xiahou Yuan. He was by nature very impulsive and also extremely stingy. When young he had been adopted by Xiahou Dun. When Xiahou Yuan was killed by Huang Zhong, Cao Cao had taken pity on him and married his daughter, Princess Qing-he, to him, so that he became one of his sons-in-law. For this position he enjoyed great deference at court. But although he held a military commission, he had never been in a battle. However, as he had requested the command, he was made commander-in-chief to lead the various forces of the west to oppose the enemy.

At this Wang Lang voiced his opposition. "His Highness has never seen a battle and is unsuitable for this post, especially when his opponent is the clever and crafty Zhuge Liang, a

man thoroughly versed in strategy. He should not be treated lightly."

"Are you in collaboration with Zhuge Liang to act as his accomplice from the inside?" reproached Xiahou Mao. "Ever since I was a boy I have studied strategy with my father, and I am well acquainted with the art of war. Why do you despise me for my youth? If I do not capture this Zhuge Liang, I swear I will not return again to see the Emperor."

Wang Lang and the other officials were silenced. Xiahou Mao took leave of the Emperor of Wei and hastened to Chang'an to put his army in order. He had 200,000 men under his command.

He would go to battle, take the signal flags in grip,
But could he play the leader, he a lad with callow lips?

The result of the battle will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* The Kingdom of Shu is assumed to be a continuation of the Han empire, since Liu Bei was a member of the Han house.

* A kind of witchcraft meant to exert an evil control over the person the wooden image represents.

* Sima Yi's familiar name.

CHAPTER NINETY-TWO

Zhao Yun Heroically Slays Five Wei Officers

Zhuge Liang Cleverly Seizes Three Cities

On the march toward the north, Zhuge Liang and his army arrived at Mianyang, where Ma Chao's tomb stood. To pay tribute to the deceased general, Zhuge Liang told Ma Dai, cousin of Ma Chao, to dress in mourning, while he went to offer sacrifices at the grave.

After this ceremony, Zhuge Liang returned to his tent. When he was discussing with his subordinates about the military campaign, scouts sent in a report that Cao Rui had put in motion an army under Xiahou Mao. Wei Yan went in to see Zhuge Liang to suggest a complicated and lengthy ruse, saying, "Xiahou Mao is nothing but a spoilt son of a rich family, soft and stupid. Give me 5,000 men, and I will go out by Baozhong, follow the range of the Qinling Mountains east to the Meridian Valley, and then turn north. In ten days I can reach Chang'an. Hearing of my movements, Xiahou Mao will hasten to abandon the city and escape toward Hengmen for sure. I will move in by the east, and you, sir, can advance with the main body by Ye Valley. In this way the whole region west of Xianyang will be ours all at once."

Zhuge Liang smiled at the proposal. “I don’t think the plan is perfect,” he said. “Do you think there are no capable men in the north? If someone suggests placing an ambush on narrow mountain paths to obstruct and destroy your army, the result is not only 5,000 victims but the severe damage this might do to the fighting spirit of the entire force. This ruse won’t work.”

“But if you go by the high road they will bring their whole host against you and may hold you indefinitely. When can we hope to seize the northern territory?”

“I’ll take the level ground by way of Longyou and follow the rule of war. How can I fail?”

So he did not adopt the plan suggested by Wei Yan, who withdrew sulk-ily. Then Zhuge Liang ordered Zhao Yun to advance.

In the meantime, Xiahou Mao was mustering his forces at Chang’an. There came an officer from Xiliang, named Han De, a man of unusually powerful strength, whose weapon was a mighty battle-ax. He brought with him 80,000 Qiang tribesmen and offered his service to Xiahou Mao, who rewarded him liberally and made him van leader of his army.

This Han De had four sons, all well-trained soldiers and experts in archery and horsemanship. Han De led his sons and the army to the Hill of Phoenix Songs, where they encountered the men of Shu.

When the two sides had drawn up in battle formation, the father, with his four sons, rode to the front and began to revile

their enemy as rebels and invaders. Provoked to anger, Zhao Yun rode forward alone to challenge the father. The eldest son galloped out to accept the challenge but was slain in the third bout. Immediately his brother went out, whirling his sword. Zhao Yun mustered his powerful dash and vigor of old, and the young man was unable to resist. At this the third son took his great halberd and rode out to his brother's aid. Faced with two opponents, Zhao Yun nevertheless was totally undaunted, never failing a single stroke. Seeing that his two brothers were unable to defeat Zhao Yun, the fourth son went to join in the fray, armed with his Sun and Moon sword. Surrounded by his three opponents, the veteran warrior still kept them at bay.

Presently a spear thrust hit home on the youngest of the four brothers, who fell. From the ranks of the Wei army rushed forth an officer, who rescued the young man back to his own side. Then Zhao Yun lowered his spear and turned to leave. Seeing this, the third son took his bow and shot three arrows at the retreating veteran warrior, who parried all three away with his spear. Infuriated, the young man set his halberd again and went in pursuit. By then, Zhao Yun had got his bow ready and shot an arrow that wounded his pursuer in the head. So the third son also fell and died. The second son, Han Yao, then galloped up and raised his sword to strike, but Zhao Yun, throwing down his spear and evading the blow, captured Han Yao with his bare hands. He quickly galloped back to his own lines with his captive, dropped him, and then dashing out again, recovered his spear and pressed on toward the enemy ranks.

Han De, overwhelmed by the loss of all his sons, turned to seek refuge behind his line. The Qiang tribesmen, who had

always known the reputation of Zhao Yun, were frightened to see him as brave as ever. None of them dared to come forward to fight the veteran warrior. So wherever Zhao Yun rode up, the tribesmen retreated. A single rider with a single spear, Zhao Yun rode at will into the enemy ranks. A poem was written in praise of Zhao Yun:

I thought of Zhao Yun of Changshan,
Who did a wondrous service at three score and ten.
Slaying four officers, he dashed into the enemy ranks
Brave as at Dangyang when he saved his lord's heir.

Seeing the invincible Zhao Yun, Deng Zhi led his men to join the fight. This completed the distress of the Xiliang men, who fled. Han De, who was nearly captured by Zhao Yun, threw off his armor and escaped on foot. The men of Shu drew off and returned to their camp.

"Congratulations, General!" said Deng Zhi. "At the age of seventy, you're very much the same hero as of old. Your feat in slaying four officers today is indeed rare."

"Well, the prime minister thought me too old and didn't wish to employ me. I had to give him some proof." Then he sent his men to deliver the captive Han Yao and an account of the victory to the prime minister.

In the meantime, Han De led his defeated army back to his chief, to whom he related his sad story in tears. Then Xiahou Mao decided to lead his own army out against Zhao Yun.

When scouts reported his coming, Zhao Yun took his spear and mounted his steed. Leading some thousand men, he rode

out to the Hill of Phoenix Songs, at the foot of which he deployed his forces. Xiahou Mao wore a golden helmet, rode a white horse, and carried in his hand a huge sword. From his place beneath the great standard he saw Zhao Yun galloping to and fro. He was going out to give battle when Han De checked him.

"Let me go and avenge my four sons!" he shouted.

He picked up his battle-ax and rode directly at Zhao Yun, who advanced furiously to engage. The contest was but short, for in the third encounter Zhao Yun's spear thrust brought Han De to his death. Without waiting a second he made straight for Xiahou Mao, who hastily dashed behind his ranks to escape. Then Deng Zhi led on the main body and completed the victory. The men of Wei retired more than ten li, where they established another camp.

Xiahou Mao, having lost two battles, discussed the situation with his officers that evening. He said, "I have long heard of Zhao Yun's name but I have never seen him. In spite of his old age he is still so brave and powerful. Now at last I believe the story of his heroism at Dangyang. None of us can repel him, I think. What is to be done, then?"

Cheng Wu, an advisor (and son of Cao Cao's old advisor, Cheng Yu), said: "To my mind, he may be a brave soldier but he knows nothing about strategies. We need not be afraid of him. Next time before you go out to give battle, you can place two forces in ambush on the right and left flanks. When the fighting begins, feign retreat and so draw him into the ambuscades. Then from a vantage point you can direct the

forces to surround him on all sides. In this way Zhao Yun can be captured."

The plan was adopted. Two parties of 30,000 men each, led by Dong Xi and Xue Ze, set up in ambush. Having made the preparation, Xiahou Mao advanced once more to challenge, with drums rolling and flags flying. Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi went out to meet him.

Deng Zhi said, "The men of Wei were beaten only yesterday. This renewed attempt must mean they have some trick. You should be cautious, General."

"I don't think this youth, with the smell of his mother's milk still on his lips, is worth caring about. I'll surely capture him today."

So ignoring the warning Zhao Yun sallied forth, and from the Wei side came an officer to meet him. But after only three bouts the man quickly ran way. Zhao Yun pursued. Then there came out to engage him no less than eight officers of Wei. The combat was not long either, for these eight men, after letting their commander Xiahou Man escape first, also fled one after another. Zhao Yun pressed forward at full speed, Deng Zhi coming up behind.

By degrees Zhao Yun was led into the heart of the enemy's trap. All of a sudden a deafening shouting rose all around. Deng Zhi hastened to halt the pursuit and retreat, but it was too late. From two sides emerged the Wei officers waiting in ambush and Deng Zhi, with his weak force, was unable to go to his comrade's rescue. Zhao Yun was thus entirely surrounded. However, he fought on fearlessly but the enemy

seemed to increase at every attempt he made to break through, while he had but a meager force of about a thousand. Presently Zhao Yun fought to the foot of a hill, where he saw Xiahou Mao directing the operation from the top. Whichever direction he took, Xiahou Mao would indicate to his men, thus making it impossible for Zhao Yun to escape. Zhao Yun decided to charge up the hill, but was hampered by rolling logs and tumbling rocks.

The battle lasted almost a whole day, yet Zhao Yun was still unable to escape. So he dismounted to rest a while, intending to renew the struggle when the moon was up. But he had barely sat down with his armor off and the moon had just risen when, amid towering flames, thundering drums, and showers of arrows, his enemies came up, all shouting loudly, "Surrender quickly, Zhao Yun!"

Hurriedly he mounted his steed to fight back. But the men of Wei pressed closer and closer on four sides, while dense flights of arrows were shot at Zhao Yun and his men from eight directions. No advance was possible for either men or horses, and the end seemed very near.

"I refused to acknowledge my waning powers," sighed Zhao Yun, "and now I'm going to die here."

At this instant, however, he heard loud shouting from the northeast corner, and there the men of Wei suddenly started to flee. To his joy he saw Zhang Bao coming up with reinforcements, his father's long spear in his hand, and a man's head hanging from the bridle of his horse.

“The prime minister was worried about you, General, so he sent me here with 5,000 men to aid you,” said Zhang Bao. “When I heard that you were surrounded, I decided to come to your rescue. This man, Xue Ze, tried to stop me and I slew him.”

Zhao Yun was very happy to hear this. As he and the young officer began to make a sortie from the northwest, they were surprised to see the men of Wei abandoning their arms and fleeing. Soon they saw another cohort sweep in from outside, the leader wielding a huge curved sword in one hand and holding a human head in another. It was Guan Xing! To the veteran general he told the same story as his cousin had done, only that the enemy he had encountered and slain was Dong Xi. Then he told him that the prime minister would soon be there, too.

Zhao Yun said, “Since you two have scored such a wonderful victory, why don’t we press on to capture Xiahou Mao and so settle the whole issue this very day?”

Zhang Bao took the advice and went ahead with his troops. Guan Xing soon followed suit, saying, “I must go and win merit for myself.”

“They belong to the generation of my sons and nephews,” said Zhao Yun to those around him, “yet they strive to win merits. I’m a senior general and a founding member of the state. How can I stay behind? I will risk my remaining days to repay the kindness of the late Emperor.”

So he also led his men to try to capture Xiahou Mao. That night the army of Wei was sorely smitten by the three forces

of Shu, till the earth was strewn with corpses and steeped with streams of blood. As well as being young and inexperienced in warfare, Xiahou Mao was not a resourceful person by nature. Seeing his army utterly routed, he fled toward Nanan, taking with him about a hundred bold officers. Left without a commander, the remaining soldiers all fled.

Guan Xing and Zhang Bao, who had heard of his escape, pressed on with the pursuit without even resting for the night. As soon as he entered Nanan, Xiahou Mao ordered the gates to be closed and dispatched his men to defend the city. Zhang Bao and his cousin soon came up and besieged the city. Presently they were joined by Zhao Yun, and a little later by Deng Zhi, so that the city was surrounded on all sides.

For ten days they kept attacking the city but their efforts were in vain. Then reports came to say that the prime minister had arrived with the central force of the main army, after leaving the rear, the left, and the right elements at Mianyang, Yangping, and the Rock City respectively. The four officers went to see him and told him about their futile effort to seize the city. Hearing this, Zhuge Liang got into his light chariot and rode around the city wall to reconnoiter, after which he returned and summoned the officers to his tent.

He said, “This city, with its deep moat and steep walls, is difficult to capture. Anyway, it is not my major concern at the moment. You people think only of seizing the city. Has it occurred to you that the enemy might send part of their forces to attack Hanzhong? If so, our army will be in danger.”

“But Xiahou Mao is a son-in-law of the imperial house of Wei,” said Deng Zhi. “His capture would be worth more than

slaying a hundred of their officers. Now he is besieged here, and it will be a pity to give up the opportunity."

"I know what to do," replied Zhuge Liang. "To the west of this city lies the town of Tianshui and to the north, Anding. Who are the prefects of these two places?"

"Ma Zun is the Prefect of Tianshui, and Cui Liang that of Anding," replied a scout.

Zhuge Liang seemed very pleased to hear this. He summoned in turn Wei Yan, Zhang Bao, Guan Xing, and two trusted soldiers to whom he gave some secret instructions. They all left to carry out his plan. After they were gone, Zhuge Liang ordered the soldiers to pile up heaps of firewood and straw beneath the city wall, saying that he was going to burn the city. When the men of Wei heard of this they were not intimidated at all but laughed heartily at this foolery.

Now the prefect of Anding, Cui Liang, was much frightened when he heard that Xiahou Mao was besieged in Nanan, and began to see to his own defenses with his 4,000 soldiers. One day there came a stranger from the south, who said he had a secret message for the prefect. Cui Liang called him in and questioned him.

The man said, "My name is Pei Xu. I am a trusted officer of General Xiahou, who has sent me to ask for help from your city and Tianshui. The situation in Nanan is most critical. For days we have raised signal fires on the city wall and waited anxiously for your two places to send relief forces, but so far neither of you has responded to our urgent call. So I was ordered to fight my way through the besiegers to seek

VK.COM/CLUB154894262

emergency help from you. Now set your men in motion tonight. The general will open the gates for you when you get there."

"Have you a letter from the general?" asked the prefect.

Pei Xu produced a letter hidden close to his skin, which was already soaked with sweat. After showing it very briefly to the prefect, he took it back, changed his horse and went on to Tianshui.

Two days later another mounted messenger came to say that the prefect of Tianshui had already started for Nanan, and he urged Prefect Cui to take action at once.

Cui Liang sought advice from his subordinates, most of whom said, "If Nanan is lost and the imperial son-in-law comes to harm, our two places will be blamed for not sending rescue forces. We have to try to save him."

Following their advice the prefect assembled his troops and started on the rescue mission, leaving only the civil officials to defend the city. On the high road to Nanan, he saw in the distance flames shooting up to the sky. When the besieged city was still fifty li away, there suddenly thundered the drums of an attacking force, and scouts came to report that the road ahead was held by Guan Xing, while Zhang Bao was coming up quickly in the rear.

At this news the soldiers began to flee in all directions. The prefect had about a hundred men left with whom he managed to escape through some bypath to get back to Anding. But when he came near his own city a flight of arrows greeted

him from the wall, and there stood Wei Yan who shouted down to him, “I have taken the city—you had better yield.”

How did Wei Yan get inside Anding? This was what had happened. Disguised as Anding soldiers, Wei Yan and his men had, in the darkness of the night, beguiled the wardens of the gate into opening it, letting the men of Shu inside.

Cui Liang hastened to set off for Tianshui. But shortly after a troop spread out before him, and beneath the great flag he saw a light chariot in which sat upright a man in a silk headpiece, a Taoist robe, and a white cloak, holding a feather fan in his hand. He at once recognized Zhuge Liang, but as he turned to flee in a hurry, up came Guan Xing and Zhang Bao, who summoned him to surrender. Finding himself entirely surrounded, he reluctantly submitted. Then he went to the Shu camp with Zhuge Liang, who treated him with courtesy.

Zhuge Liang asked, “Is the Prefect of Nanan a friend of yours?”

“His name is Yang Ling, a cousin of Yang Fu. Living in neighboring districts we are very good friends.”

“I would like to trouble you to go to Nanan and persuade him to capture Xiahou Mao,” said Zhuge Liang. “Will you do it?”

“If you order me to go, please withdraw your army for the time being so as to let me get into the city to speak with him.”

Zhuge Liang consented and ordered his forces to draw off twenty li and camp. Cui Liang rode out by himself to the city and hailed open the gate. He went at once to see his friend in

his residence. After they had greeted each other, Cui Liang related in detail what had happened.

Yang Ling said, “We have received great kindness from our lord. How can we betray him? But we can turn Zhuge Liang’s ruse against himself.”

He led Cui Liang to Xiahou Mao and told him the whole story.

“What is your plan?” asked Xiahou Mao.

“We can pretend to offer the city to induce the men of Shu within. Once they are inside, we can massacre them.”

Cui Liang agreed to comply with this scheme. He then went back to see Zhuge Liang, to whom he told the necessary lie, saying that Yang Ling would have tried to capture Xiahou Mao himself, but as he had but few valiant officers he would open the gates to let the Shu army in for the purpose.

“That is simple enough,” replied Zhuge Liang. “Your hundred men who surrendered with you are here. Let some of my officers mix among them, disguised as your men from Anding, and so get into Nanan, where they can hide in Xiahou Mao’s dwelling. Meanwhile, you can arrange with Yang Ling to open the gates at midnight to let our men in to assist.”

Cui Liang thought to himself, “If I object, Zhuge Liang might suspect me. It’s better to take them with me and kill them as soon as they get into the city. Then I’ll raise a fire as signal to beguile Zhuge Liang to enter, and so dispose of him as well.”

So he consented.

Then Zhuge Liang said, “I will let my faithful officers Guan Xing and Zhang Bao go with you. To set Xiahou Mao’s mind at rest, you can tell him that you have brought a rescue force. When you raise a signal fire I will come in person to capture him.”

At dusk the two young officers, having received their secret orders from Zhuge Liang, put on their armor, mounted their steeds, took their weapons, and mingled with the Anding men. Cui Liang led the small force to the gate. Yang Ling, who was on the wall, had the drawbridge hoisted. Leaning against the railing, he scanned the men below.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“We are rescuers from Anding,” replied Cui Liang.

So saying he shot an arrow over the wall, to which was attached a secret note to his friend. It ran as follows: “Zhuge Liang is sending two of his officers into the city to lie in wait and collaborate with his men from outside. But do not alarm them now, lest our plan becomes known. Wait until we get inside. We can deal with them then.”

Yang Ling went to show this note to Xiahou Mao, who said, “Since Zhuge Liang has fallen into our trap, we can place a hundred or so guards in the house and, as soon as these two Shu officers get inside, shut the gates and slay them. Then give the signal fire from the wall to induce Zhuge Liang to enter. Once he is in, set the men in ambush and he will be seized.”

All arrangements being made, Yang Ling went back to the wall and said to the warden, “These are Anding men. Let them in.”

The gate was thrown open. Guan Xing went ahead, closely following Cui Liang, while Zhang Bao stayed behind. Yang Ling came down from the wall and stood by the gate to welcome them. As he got near Guan Xing suddenly lifted his sword and slew Yang Ling. Scared, Cui Liang hurriedly turned his steed to flee to the drawbridge. But Zhang Bao was on him at once.

“You ruffian!” he cried. “Did you think your vile plot could deceive our prime minister?”

With that he raised his spear and pierced Cui Liang to death. By then Guan Xing had climbed up the wall and lit a fire. Soon the men of Shu swarmed into the city. Xiahou Mao, utterly unprepared, tried to fight his way out through the south gate. There he found his way blocked by a troop led by Wang Ping. The two engaged, but in one bout Xiahou Mao was captured alive. Those with him were slain.

Zhuge Liang entered the city to call the Wei soldiers to surrender and pacify the inhabitants. His army observed strict discipline and the local people were not harmed.

The battle being over, the officers all came to report their deeds of valor. Zhuge Liang ordered his men to place Xiahou Mao in a prisoner’s cart.

Then Deng Zhi asked, “How did you know that Cui Liang was playing a trick?”

"I knew the man was unwilling in his heart to yield, so I deliberately sent him into the city, where I expected him to inform Xiahou Mao of our plan and weave a counter plot with him against us. When he returned I could tell from his manner that he was treacherous, and so I proposed sending Guan Xing and Zhang Bao with him into the city to give him a feeling of security. Had he been true to me, he would have opposed this, but he accepted it readily because he was afraid of arousing my suspicion. He thought these two could easily be slain once inside while we, thinking we had placed our own men in the city, would feel safe enough to enter. But I had already given orders to Guan Xing and Zhang Bao to slay the traitors at the gate. Those inside the city would be totally unprepared and immediately afterwards our army would fall upon them, taking the enemy by surprise."

All the officers bowed in appreciation of the prime minister's wonderful foresight.

Then Zhuge Liang said, "I sent one of my trusty men to deceive Cui Liang, pretending to be a Wei officer called Pei Xu. I have also sent him to Tianshui to play the same trick but so far the prefect has not sent his men here. I wonder what could be the reason. Now let us set out to seize that place."

Then he left two officers to guard the newly taken cities of Nanan and Anding, while Wei Yan and his men were to capture Tianshui.

Now let us look back and find out what was happening in Tianshui. When Ma Zun, Prefect of Tianshui, heard of the besieging of Nanan and Xiahou Mao's predicament, he called

a council to discuss the matter. Several of his subordinates strongly advised him to send a rescue force without delay.

"If anything should happen to the imperial son-in-law we will be held guilty of having made no attempt to save him," they argued. "Why not dispatch our entire force to his rescue?"

Ma Zun was still pondering over what was best to do when it was announced that Xiahou Mao's trusty officer, Pei Xu, had arrived. The messenger was summoned before the prefect, to whom he showed the document and said, "The general wishes the two districts of Tianshui and Anding to dispatch rescue forces immediately." Then he hurriedly went away. The next day came another messenger who said that the Anding men had set out and urged Ma Zun to lead his men to join them. The prefect then decided to take action.

But just then a man suddenly walked in and said, "Sir, you have fallen into Zhuge Liang's trap."

The speaker was Jiang Wei, son of a former local official who had died in the Emperor's service during a riot of the Qiang tribesmen. Since childhood Jiang Wei had read very widely, and was also skilled in martial arts and military strategies. His filial piety to his mother won him much esteem from his fellow men. Later he was employed in the local government and held a military rank.

Jiang Wei said to the prefect, "I hear Zhuge Liang has defeated General Xiahou, who is now so completely besieged in Nanan that even a single drop of water cannot escape. How then can this messenger have got out? Secondly, none of us has heard the name Pei Xu, let alone met him. And thirdly,

this other messenger from Anding did not have any official document. Judging from these facts I think the men must be impostors sent to beguile you into leaving the city undefended. And they must have placed an ambush near here. After you set out, they will come to capture the city."

The prefect began to understand. "I would have fallen into their vile trick if not for you."

Jiang Wei said with a smile, "But do not be anxious—I have a scheme by which we can capture Zhuge Liang and relieve Nanan."

However cleverly one may scheme and design,
An unexpected rival comes to spoil your plan.

Jiang Wei's strategy will be disclosed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-THREE

Jiang Wei Submits to Zhuge Liang

Zhuge Liang Reviles Wang Lang to Death

Jiang Wei explained his scheme to the prefect in the following way: "Zhuge Liang must have placed an ambush somewhere near and, after our soldiers are inveigled into leaving our city, his men will take the advantage to seize it. Now give me 3,000 veterans, and I will place them in ambush at a key point. Then you, sir, can lead your men out, but do not go far. Turn back after thirty li. When you see the signal fire I raise, join me in attacking the enemy from the front and the rear. If Zhuge Liang is there we will capture him."

The prefect adopted this plan and gave the required number of men to Jiang Wei, who departed at once. Then he and an officer, named Liang Qian, led the remaining soldiers out to wait for the agreed signal. Only two civil officials, Liang Xu and Yin Shang, were left to guard the city.

Just as Jiang Wei had predicted, Zhuge Liang had sent Zhao Yun to lie in ambush among some hills to wait till the Tianshui men left the city to capture it. That day his spies reported the departure of the prefect. Greatly pleased, Zhao Yun at once sent on the news to two of his colleagues, Zhang Yi and Gao Xiang, and told them to intercept Ma Zun. These

two officers had been lying in wait for that purpose at the order of Zhuge Liang.

Zhao Yun and his 5,000 men then quickly marched to the city wall and called out, “I am Zhao Zi-long of Changshan. You have fallen into our trap, you know. Surrender quickly, and you may save your lives.”

But instead of being alarmed Liang Xu laughed loudly, saying, “On the contrary, you have fallen into our trap—only you do not know it yet.”

Zhao Yun was about to begin the attack on the city when suddenly a tremendous shouting broke out and roaring flames shot up all around. And there appeared a youthful officer on a bucking steed, armed with a spear.

“Jiang Wei of Tianshui is here!” he cried.

Zhao Yun raised his spear and rode directly at him. After a few bouts Jiang Wei seemed to fight with redoubled strength, and Zhao Yun, very much surprised, thought to himself, “Why, I never expected to find such a warrior here in Tianshui!” As the combat went on, the prefect and Liang Qian came back to join in the battle. Zhao Yun, finding himself caught in between enemy forces, set to cut his way through and led off his defeated men. He was pursued, but the timely intervention of his two colleagues helped him get away safely.

When Zhuge Liang heard of what had happened he was surprised. “Who is this person that has discovered my secret plan?”

A man from Nanan, who happened to be present, told him Jiang Wei's name, his devotion to his mother, his courage and his wisdom, and his mastery in both books of learning and martial arts, concluding that he was the real hero of the day. Zhao Yun also praised him for his skill with the spear, which he said was quite different from any other warrior's.

"I want to take Tianshui now," said Zhuge Liang, "but I did not expect it to be guarded by such a man." Then he marched his great army toward the city.

Meanwhile, Jiang Wei had gone back to see the prefect and said, "Zhao Yun's defeat will bring Zhuge Liang here with the main body. He will expect us to be in the city. Therefore we can divide our force into four groups. I will lead one group to go into hiding on the east and intercept them when they come. You, with Liang Qian and Yin Shang, can prepare two ambushes outside the city. Leave Liang Xu and the common people to go up on the wall and defend the city."

His plan was adopted and the arrangements made.

Now Zhuge Liang, concerned about Jiang Wei, took command of the advance guard himself and proceeded toward Tianshui. As the army drew near the city he gave the order to attack at once. He said, "The best policy to seize a city is to encourage the men to attack it on the day of arrival, accompanied by loud shouting and heavy rolling of drums. Any delay will wear down the men's fighting spirit and spoil everything."

So the army went straight to the city wall, where they saw an orderly display of flags and banners and they dared not attack

at once but waited. At midnight, however, fires suddenly started up all around and a great shouting was heard. The men of Shu were wondering where the enemy had come from when they noticed that there were answering shouts from above the wall. Frightened, they began to run away. Zhuge Liang hastened to mount his horse and, with Guan Xing and Zhang Bao as escort, escaped from the danger. Looking behind, they saw a troop in the east, each man carrying a torch, winding along like a huge serpent. Zhuge Liang bade Guan Xing find out who they were, and when he heard that these were Jiang Wei's men, he said with a sigh, "An army owes more to how it is commanded than to its number. This Jiang Wei really has the making of a great general."

He led his army back to camp, where he mused for a long time. Then he summoned a native of Anding and asked, "Where does Jiang Wei's mother live?"

"She lives in Jixian," the man replied.

Zhuge Liang called in Wei Yan and said to him, "Take a troop and spread the tale that you are going to take Jixian. If Jiang Wei turns up, let him enter the city."

"What is the most important place in this region?" asked Zhuge Liang of the Anding man again.

The man replied, "The money and grain of Tianshui are stored in Shanggui—if that place is taken, the supplies will be cut off."

This was good news, so Zhao Yun was sent to attack Shanggui while Zhuge Liang made a camp some thirty li south of the city.

Spies took the news of the movements of these three forces into Tianshui. When Jiang Wei heard that one body of the enemy army was to attack Jixian he pleaded with the prefect to let him go to its defense, so that he might also protect his aged mother at the same time. The prefect granted his wish and he was given command of the defence of his hometown with 3,000 soldiers. At the same time Liang Qian was sent to defend Shanggui.

When Jiang Wei came to Jixian he encountered a cohort under Wei Yan. The two of them engaged in combat but after a few passes Wei Yan feigned defeat and ran away. Jiang Wei entered the city, where he closed the gates and prepared to maintain a strong defense. Then he went home to see his mother.

In the same way Zhao Yun allowed Liang Qian to enter Shanggui.

Then Zhuge Liang sent for his prisoner, Xiahou Mao, and, when he was brought to his tent, asked suddenly. “Are you afraid of death?”

Xiahou Mao prostrated himself and begged for his life.

“Well, Jiang Wei of Tianshui, who is now guarding Jixian, has sent a letter to say that he would surrender if only that would secure your safety. Now I am going to let you go if you

agree to induce Jiang Wei to come over to me. Do you accept the condition?"

"I am willing to do that for you," said Xiahou Mao.

Zhuge Liang then gave his prisoner clothing and a saddled horse, but let him ride away all by himself.

Having been set free, Xiahou Mao tried to get back to his own people but he did not know the way. Presently he came across some townsfolk, apparently in flight, and he questioned them.

"We are Jixian people," they said. "Jiang Wei has surrendered the city to Zhuge Liang. The men of Shu are looting and burning, and we have escaped. We are going to Shanggui."

"Do you know who is holding Tianshui?"

"Prefect Ma Zun," they answered.

Hearing this, Xiahou Mao rode quickly toward Tianshui. On the way he met more people, leading sons and carrying daughters, who told him the same story. By and by he arrived at Tianshui, and, as he was recognized, the wardens hastened to open the gate for him, and the prefect came to greet him and asked in surprise of his adventure. He told him what Zhuge Liang had said about Jiang Wei and what he had heard from the fugitives.

"Well, I never thought Jiang Wei would have gone over to Shu," said the prefect sadly.

“It seems he was only pretending to surrender in order to save you, General,” said Liang Xu. “But he has surrendered,” said Xiahou Mao. “How could it be just a pretense?”

They were all perplexed. At the first watch the men of Shu came to attack again. By the light of the flames, the men on the wall saw Jiang Wei underneath, armed with his spear and reining in his horse. He called out for Xiahou Mao.

Xiahou Mao and the prefect ascended the wall, where they saw Jiang Wei swaggering to and fro. Seeing them, he cried out, “I surrendered for your sake, General—why have you gone back on your word?”

“You have received Wei’s bounty—why did you surrender to Shu?” reproached Xiahou Mao. “And what do you mean by saying that I have gone back on my word?”

“How can you talk like that? Was it not you who sent me a letter telling me to surrender? To secure your own safety you have sacrificed me. But I have surrendered to Shu and now I am a general of a high rank. I see no sense in returning to Wei.”

So saying, he urged his men to attack the city and did not withdraw till dawn. (In fact, this Jiang Wei was but a Shu soldier in disguise. It was Zhuge Liang’s ruse to let it appear as if Jiang Wei had been leading the attack on the city. In the fire during the night no one could detect the disguise.)

Zhuge Liang then led the army to attack Jixian. The grain in the city was insufficient to feed the soldiers. From the wall Jiang Wei saw wagons of grain and forage being driven into

Wei Yan's camp, and he decided to try to snatch some. So he led his 3,000 men out of the city to attack the grain wagons. As soon as he appeared the convoy abandoned the wagons and fled. Jiang Wei seized them, and was taking them into the city when he was met by a troop under the command of Zhang Yi. They fought but after a short while Wang Ping came to reinforce his colleague, so that Jiang Wei was attacked on two sides. This proved too much for him and he had to abandon the spoils and try to re-enter the city.

But as he drew near he saw in dismay Shu ensigns fluttering on the wall. It turned out the city had been seized by Wei Yan in his absence. Through desperate fighting, Jiang Wei got clear and set off for Tianshui. By then he had still a few score of followers left. But presently the small force fell in with Zhang Bao, and at the end of this combat Jiang Wei found himself all alone. He reached Tianshui and hailed the gate. When the guards saw him, they hastily informed the prefect.

"He must have come to beguile me into opening the gate," said Ma Zun.

So he ordered the guards on the wall to shoot at him. Jiang Wei had to turn back, but there he saw the men of Shu close at hand, so he set off as fast as he could for Shanggui. When he got there, however, Liang Qian, who saw him on the wall, abused him vehemently.

"You traitor," he cried. "How dare you come to cajole me into giving up my city? I know you have surrendered to Shu."

And he also ordered his men to shoot at the hapless fugitive.

Jiang Wei was thus denied any chance to defend himself. Lifting his eyes to Heaven, while tears rolled down his cheeks, he whipped up his steed and rode off toward Chang'an.

Before he had got very far he came to a woods overgrown with tall trees. From among these appeared a company of soldiers led by Guan Xing, who blocked his way. Weary as were both the horse and rider, there was no chance of successful resistance, and Jiang Wei turned back. But suddenly from behind a slope emerged a small chariot in which sat Zhuge Liang, dressed as usual in his silk headpiece and white cloak and carrying his feather fan.

He addressed Jiang Wei by his familiar name and said, "Is it not time to yield?"

Jiang Wei paused and pondered for quite some time. In front of him was Zhuge Liang and behind were Guan Xing and his men. Besides, he did not really have anywhere else to go to. So he dismounted and offered his submission.

Zhuge Liang at once got out of his chariot to welcome him. Taking him by the hand, he said, "Ever since I left my humble cottage I have been seeking some worthy man to whom I might impart the knowledge that I have spent my life in acquiring. I never found the person, much to my regret. But now that I have met you, my desire is attained."

Overjoyed, Jiang Wei bowed to thank him. Zhuge Liang then took him to camp, where a general council was called to discuss how to capture Tianshui and Shanggui.

Jiang Wei made a suggestion. “The two officials, Yin Shang and Liang Xu, are good friends of mine,” he said. “Let me write to them and shoot the letters into the city. That will cause mutiny and the city can be seized.”

Zhuge Liang adopted his plan. So the two secret letters were duly written and sent flying over the ramparts, where they were found and taken to the prefect. Filled with suspicion, the prefect referred the matter to Xiahou Mao and asked him to decide what to do as soon as possible.

“Put both the men to death,” replied Xiahou Mao.

But Yin Shang got wind of this and said to his friend, “We might as well yield the city to Shu and they will treat us well for that.”

That evening Xiahou Mao sent his men to summon the two officers to him several times. They knew that danger was imminent so, fully armed, they led the soldiers under their command to the main gate and opened it to let in the men of Shu. The prefect and his exalted guest, Xiahou Mao, fled in panic by the west gate with a few hundred faithful followers and sought refuge in Qianghu.

The defectors welcomed Zhuge Liang into the city, who restored order and calmed the people. This done, Zhuge Liang asked them how he might capture Shanggui. Liang Xu said, “My brother holds that city, and I will call upon him to yield it.”

Zhuge Liang was very pleased. Presently Liang Xu rode over to Shanggui and called out his brother to submit. Zhuge Liang

rewarded him and then made Liang Xu prefect of Tianshui; Yin Shang, magistrate of Jixian; and Liang Qian, magistrate of Shanggui.

Now the army was ready to advance. Some of the officers asked their chief why he did not pursue and capture Xiahou Mao.

Zhuge Liang replied, “To release him is like freeing a duck, but in Jiang Wei I acquired a phoenix.”

With the seizure of these three cities Zhuge Liang’s fame increased greater than ever, and the neighboring towns and cities simply surrendered whenever his army passed without even putting up any resistance. Then he reorganized his army, adding to it all the remaining forces in Hanzhong, and advanced through the Qishan Mountains to the west bank of the Wei River.

Away in the capital of Wei, Zhuge Liang’s movements were reported to the young Emperor at a court assembly held in the first year of the period Tai He. He was told that Xiahou Mao had lost three cities and fled to Qiang hu, while the Shu enemy had reached the Qishan Mountains, and their advance units were already posted on the west bank of the Wei River. Alarmed, Cao Rui turned to his ministers and asked for a volunteer to go out and drive off the enemy.

Wang Lang stepped forward, saying, “I observed that every time General Cao Zhen was sent by the late Emperor on an expedition he succeeded—why not send him to drive off these men of Shu?”

Cao Rui accepted his advice, whereupon he summoned Cao Zhen, to whom he said, “The late Emperor confided me to your guardianship—you cannot sit by while the enemy ravages the country.”

Cao Zhen replied, “Your Majesty, my talents are but poor and unequal to the task you propose.”

“You are a trusted minister of the state and you must not refuse this task,” said Wang Lang. “Feeble as I am, I will accompany you on the expedition.”

“After the bounties I have received I dare not refuse,” replied Cao Zhen. “But I would like to have an assistant.”

“Just name whoever you want,” said the Emperor.

So Cao Zhen named Guo Huai, whose official rank was Marquis of Sheting and Governor of Yongzhou.

Consequently Cao Zhen was appointed commander-in-chief, with Guo Huai as deputy commander and Wang Lang, who was already seventy-six, as chief counselor. Two hundred thousand soldiers from both capitals were assigned to Cao Zhen, who selected his cousin, Cao Zun, as leader of the van and another officer, General Zhu Zan, as his second-in-command. The army moved out in the eleventh month, and the Emperor went outside the west gate to see it depart.

In due time the army arrived at Chang’an, where they crossed the Wei River and camped to its west. Cao Zhen consulted

Wang Lang and Guo Huai about a strategy to drive out the invaders.

Wang Lang said, “Tomorrow let us draw up our army in excellent order and unfurl all the banners. I will go out and speak with Zhuge Liang. I’m sure my words will be enough to reduce Zhuge Liang to meek submission, and the men of Shu will march home without a fight.”

Delighted with this proposal, Cao Zhen gave a strict order: “Tomorrow morning, have breakfast at the fourth watch. By daylight the army must be in perfect order, and both men and horses are to be in best spirits. Everything is to be grand and imposing, with flags fluttering and drums rolling, and every man in his place.” Then he sent a messenger to the Shu camp to deliver a declaration of battle.

The next day, when the two armies were drawn up facing each other in front of the Qishan Mountains, the men of Shu saw that their enemies were powerful-looking men, very different from those whom Xiahou Mao had commanded. After three rolls of drums Wang Lang rode out, accompanied by Cao Zhen, the commander-in-chief and Guo Huai, the second-in-command. The two van leaders maintained a firm defense of the battle formations at two corners. Then an orderly galloped to the front and called out in a loud voice: “We request the commander of the opposing army to come out to a parley.”

At this, from the Shu battle array an opening was made at the main standard, through which rode out Guan Xing and Zhang Bao, who reined in their horses and took their positions on the right and left. They were followed by several groups of

valiant officers who stood in orderly lines, and finally, there appeared from beneath the great standard in the center of the array a four-wheeled carriage, in which sat the stately figure of Zhuge Liang, wearing a silk headdress, white robe bound with a black sash, and holding a feather fan in his hand. He advanced with an air of perfect ease.

Looking across at the Wei battle lines, Zhuge Liang saw three big umbrellas and on the flags were large characters bearing the names of the commanders. In the middle was an aged figure, who was Minister Wang Lang, chief counselor of the army.

"He will try to influence me with words," thought Zhuge Liang, "I must answer accordingly." He ordered his carriage to be pushed beyond the formation of his army, and told a minor officer to go forth and call out, "The Prime Minister of Han wishes to speak with Minister Wang."

At this call Wang Lang also rode out. Zhuge Liang bowed with his hands from the carriage, and Wang Lang bent his body slightly from horseback to return the salute. Then he began his prepared speech. "I have long heard of your reputation, sir, and I am pleased to meet you today. Since you are aware of the decrees of Heaven and understand the conditions of the world, why do you raise an army for an unjustified war?"

Zhuge Liang replied, "I hold an edict to destroy rebels. How can it be unjustified?"

Wang Lang said, "Even Heaven has its mutations, let alone human dynasties, which are subject to change from time to

time; and the supreme dignity falls at last to the man of virtue. This is the inevitable law of nature. In the days of the emperors Huan and Ling, the Yellow Turban rebellion arose, and for a long time feudal lords competed for power in the country. Later, in the periods of Chu Ping and Jian An, there was the revolt of Dong Zhuo, followed by that of Li Jue and Guo Si. Next, Yuan Shu usurped the imperial title in Shouchun, while his brother Yuan Shao dominated the vast territory of Ye. Liu Biao occupied Jingzhou, and Lu Bu swallowed up Xuzhou. Brigands rose like swarms of wasps and evil schemers followed their own will, creating most imminent danger to the imperial house and exposing the common people to the gravest of perils.

"Then the founder of Wei, Emperor Wu (Cao Cao), swept away rebellion in all directions, restoring order in the remotest corners of the land. All hearts turned to him in gratitude, and people from the four quarters admired his virtue. Yet, it was not through power or force that he gained this—it was simply the will of Heaven.

"His son and successor, Emperor Wen (Cao Pi), divinely well-versed in the art of letters and of war, ascended the throne in accordance with the decree of Heaven and the desire of men, and following the traditional example of Yao, yielding his supreme title to Shun. The Kingdom of Wei, set in the heart of China, dominates all the regions of the country. Is it not adequate proof that it accords to Heaven's mandate and men's wishes?

"Sir, you are a man of great talent and ambition. You even want to compare yourself to Guan Zhong and Yue Yi of old. Why do you act in opposition to the design of Heaven and

turn away from the desire of men? You cannot be ignorant of the wise old saying: He who accords with Heaven's will flourishes, while he who opposes it shall be destroyed.

"Now we, the mighty Wei, have an army of a million soldiers and a thousand fine officers. Can the glowworm in the parched stubble rival the glorious moon in the sky? You, sir, had better put down your arms, take off your armor, and submit. You will be created a lord. That will mean tranquillity for the state and happiness for the people. Is that not a desirable outcome?"

Zhuge Liang laughed. "I thought I would hear some noble discourse from you, once a highly-esteemed minister of the Han Dynasty. Could I have imagined that you would utter such depraved words? Now listen, all officers and men, to what I have to say. In the days of the emperors Huan and Ling the rule of Han declined. Palace eunuchs brought calamity to the court, and trouble was rife in every quarter of the country. After the rebellion of the Yellow Turbans, there arose Dong Zhuo and his followers Li Jue and Guo Si, who abducted the emperor and persecuted the people. But what was the cause of all this? Because rotten wood served as officials in royal courts and brute beasts received their feed in imperial halls; because men with wolfish hearts and cur-like conduct filled up government offices and servile flatterers packed the administrative bodies. Therefore the state was in ruins and the people were trodden into the mire.

"I have long known your conduct. Originally a native of the shores of the eastern sea, you were recommended to be an official. As such, you ought to aid your sovereign and support the state, bring security to Han and prosperity to the House of

Liu. Who could have expected that you would turn traitor and plot with the renegades to usurp the throne? Indeed, Heaven and Earth will not tolerate such heinous crimes as evil as yours! And the people throughout this country wish to devour your flesh.

"Fortunately, Heaven did not intend to terminate the Han Dynasty and the late Emperor Zhao Lie (Liu Bei) continued the line in the west. Today I have been entrusted by his heir, the present Emperor, with the mission of destroying you rebels. Since you are such a fawning servant you ought to hide your body and cover your face, and concern yourself with finding some means to sustain yourself. How dare you come out before the army to rave about the decrees of Heaven. You hoary-headed old fool! Gray-haired scoundrel! Any day from now you will go down to the Nine Springs. How will you face the twenty-four Emperors of Han? Go away, you old rascal! Tell your fellow rebels to come and fight a decisive battle with me!"

As Zhuge Liang finished his harangue, wrath filled Wang Lang's heart. With one loud cry he fell down from his horse and died there and then.

This exploit of Zhuge Liang's has been lauded in a poem:

On the soil of the former Qin, the armies met,
And Zhuge Liang's courage defied a myriad men.
With his three-inch long tongue,
He cursed to death the vile old minister Wang Lang.

As Wang Lang dropped dead, Zhuge Liang, pointing toward Cao Zhen with his fan, said: "I am not going to force you to

fight now. Go and put your army in order for tomorrow's battle."

So saying he turned back and both armies withdrew for that day. The corpse of the dead counselor was duly placed in a coffin and sent back to Chang'an.

The deputy commander, Guo Huai, proposed a ruse to his chief. "Zhuge Liang expects us to be in mourning and will certainly raid our camp tonight. We can divide our army into four units. Let two bodies of our men go and attack their camp through some secret mountain paths and the other two wait in ambush outside our own camp and smite the enemy troops when they come to raid us."

Delighted with this plan, Cao Zhen replied, "That's exactly what I've been thinking."

So he summoned the two van leaders and said to them, "Take 10,000 men each and get to the back of the Qishan Mountains. When you see the men of Shu march toward our camp, proceed to attack theirs. But if our enemy makes no move, withdraw at once and don't advance rashly."

Then he arranged with Guo Huai to lead a force each and hide outside the camp, leaving only a few men and some firewood within. A fire was to be lit as a signal if the men of Shu were seen coming. Orders being given, officers went to make necessary preparations.

In the meantime, Zhuge Liang was also preparing for a night operation. He first called in Zhao Yun and Wei Yan, who

were told to take their own troops and raid the enemy camp at night.

“Cao Zhen is an experienced strategist and will be on guard,” ventured Wei Yan in objection.

“But that’s just what I want,” laughed Zhuge Liang. “I want him to know we will attack his camp tonight. Undoubtedly he will place some troops in ambush behind Qishan, who will make for our camp as soon as they see our men head toward theirs. So I want you to let yourselves be seen passing the hill, but you’re to camp far in the distance so that they will feel safe to make an attempt at our camp. Wait until you see the signal of fire. At the same time, Wen-zhang (Wei Yan) is to hold the pass to the hill. And Zi-long, you are to turn back, and, on the way you will encounter the men of Wei returning–but let them pass at first and attack only when they are halfway in their retreat. The enemy will assuredly fall to fighting among themselves, and we will win a complete victory.”

These two having gone away to carry out their parts of the overall plan, Zhuge Liang next called up Guan Xing and Zhang Bao. “You two are to take a troop each and hide at some key points in the hill. When the men of Wei come, let them go. Then take the road they come by to their camp.”

These two having left, he placed four officers in ambush outside the camp to attack the men of Wei on all sides. Within the camp the tents and shelters were left standing as if the camp was occupied, while firewood was heaped up ready to give the signal. Zhuge Liang then retired with the others to the rear of the camp to watch.

As dusk fell, the two van leaders of the Wei army, Cao Zun and Zhu Zan, left camp and moved quietly toward the camp of Shu. At about the second watch they spotted some slight movements in front of the hill in the distance.

Cao Zun thought to himself, “Commander Guo has really a wonderful prevision.”

Then he urged his men to speed up. At about midnight the troop reached the Shu camp. He at once dashed into the enclosure, only to find it totally deserted. Knowing that he had tumbled into a trap, he hurriedly began to retreat. As flames sprang up, his colleague Zhu Zan also arrived, and the two bodies of men fought with each other in the confusion. It was only after the two leaders met that they discovered they were fighting their own men.

As they hastened to restore order, loud shouting arose all around and on came the four bodies of men who had been lying in ambush for them. The two Wei leaders, with about a hundred of their close followers, fled in the direction of the high road. But before long rolling drums announced another body of their enemy, and they found their flight cut short by Zhao Yun.

“Where are you going, you rebels?” he cried. “Quickly submit!”

The two leaders of Wei fled. But soon they were barred by yet another force, led by Wei Yan. They were thoroughly beaten and only barely managed to escape to their own camp. But the few sentinels left in the camp thought they were the men of Shu coming to raid, so they hastened to light the fire,

and at this signal Cao Zhen rushed up from the left and Guo Huai from the right, and a confused fight with their own men began afresh.

While this was happening, three cohorts of the men of Shu arrived, with Wei Yan in the center, and Guan Xing and Zhang Bao on the two flanks, and a fierce battle ensued. It ended with the defeat of the men of Wei, who lost many of their officers and retreated more than ten li. Zhuge Liang, after winning a great victory, called back his men and withdrew.

The two commanders of Wei collected together their beaten men and went back to camp, where they discussed their next move. Cao Zhen said, "Now we are weak but our enemy is strong. Have you any plan to drive them away?"

"Defeat or success is but common in war," replied Guo Huai. "We mustn't lose heart. I have a plan that will disorganize them so that they will be cut off from one another and compelled to withdraw."

Sadly the Wei leaders failed,
To seek help they'd turn to the west.

Guo Huai's plan will be unfolded in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-FOUR

Zhuge Liang Smites the Qiang Troops in a Snowstorm

Sima Yi Moves Swiftly to Capture Meng Da

Guo Huai laid his plan before his chief: "The Western Qiang (Tangut) tribes have paid annual tribute to us since the days of the Founder of our House. Later, Emperor Wen treated them kindly. Now let us maintain a strong defense at all the crucial vantage points here and at the same time send a secret emissary to seek their help. With a promise of a marriage alliance we may get them to attack Shu in the rear. At the same time our own army will strike in full force at the enemy in the front. Thus we will be attacking the men of Shu from all sides. How can we not win a great victory?"

Cao Zhen agreed and a messenger was sent forthwith to Western Qiang.

The prince, named Cheliji, had rendered yearly tribute to Han (and later to Wei) since the days of Cao Cao. He had two chief ministers: Prime Minister Yadan in charge of civil administration, and Marshal Yueji managing military affairs.

When the emissary from Wei arrived with Cao Zhen's letter and presents of gold and pearls, he first sought the prime minister, to whom he gave some gifts and explained the

purpose of his visit. Thus he gained an interview with the prince. The letter was duly delivered and the gifts presented. The prince accepted both and consulted his counselors on the matter.

Yadan said, “We have always had contacts with Wei. Now that General Cao Zhen asks for our aid and promises an alliance of marriage we ought to accede to his request.”

The prince took his advice and ordered his two chief ministers to raise an army of 150,000 trained soldiers, who were skilled in shooting arrows and crossbows, wielding spears and swords, and flinging caltrops and hammers. Beside these various weapons, the Qiang tribesmen also used battle chariots that were covered with iron plates that had been nailed onto them, to load grain, arms, and other odds and ends. The chariots were drawn either by camels or mules. The soldiers who operated the chariots were known as iron chariot troops.

The two ministers took leave of their prince and went straight away to Xiping Pass. The officer in command at the pass, Han Zhen, at once sent a report by dispatch to Zhuge Liang.

When he received the dispatch, Zhuge Liang asked his officers if any of them would go and drive off the Qiang army. Guan Xiang and Zhang Bao volunteered.

Zhuge Liang said, “Well, it’s good that you want to go but you’re ignorant of the roads.”

Then he called Ma Dai, to whom he said, "You know the disposition of the Qiang people from your long residence there—you can go as a guide."

They took 50,000 veterans for the expedition. Several days later they drew near their enemy. Climbing up a hill, Guan Xing went with a hundred or so cavalrymen to observe and saw a long line of iron chariots, with the tail of each linked to the head of the next—the Qiang soldiers gave the appearance of being camped wherever they went. The chariots, which were armed to the teeth, looked like a well-guarded rampart. Guan Xing studied them for a long time but was quite at a loss as to how to overcome them. He returned and consulted his two colleagues.

Ma Dai said, "Let's see what they'll do at the battle tomorrow, and we can decide on our plans." So the next day they drew up their army in three divisions, with Guan Xing in the center, Zhang Bao on the left, and Ma Dai on the right. Thus they advanced.

From the Qiang array rode out Marshal Yueji, who had an iron mace in his hand and a carved bow hung at his waist. Guan Xing gave the order for all three divisions to press forward. Suddenly the Qiang soldiers stepped to each side while in the center the iron chariots rolled out like surging waves, from which flew arrows and bolts all at once—the men of Shu could not stand against them.

The two wings retreated first, but the central division led by Guan Xing was surrounded by the enemy in the northwest corner. In spite of his every effort, Guan Xing could not get free, for the iron chariots were like a city wall and no opening

could be found. The men of Shu were quite helpless, unable to assist each other. Guan Xing made for the mountains in the hope of finding a way of escape. As it grew dark a body of Qiang soldiers crowded up, holding black flags. Their leader, with an iron mace in his hand, shouted, “Halt, young man! I am Marshal Yueji!”

Guan Xing only hastened forward faster, plying his whip to urge his steed. Presently there emerged a deep gully before him, and he had to turn back and fight. At the sight of Yueji, Guan Xing’s courage turned cold and he could not defend himself. So he leaped into the gully to escape. Yueji came close and swung his mace at him. Dodging aside, Guan Xing avoided the blow, but it hit his steed on the hip. The poor beast fell into water, and with it went Guan Xing.

Suddenly he heard a great splash behind him. For no apparent reason, Yueji and his horse had also fallen into the gully. Surprised, Guan Xing braced himself and struggled in the water to see. There on the bank he saw a powerful officer driving off the Qiang. Guan Xing gripped his sword and waited to strike at Yueji as he came up but his enemy jumped out of the water and fled. So Guan Xing caught the steed Yueji had abandoned, led him up the bank, and rearranged the saddle and rein. Then he girded on his sword and mounted. Ahead he saw the unknown officer still chasing the enemy.

“Whoever this may be, he has saved my life,” thought Guan Xing. “I ought to make his acquaintance.”

So he pressed forward after his rescuer. As he drew nearer he saw, enveloped in mist, the dim figure of an officer of rank, with a dark red face and bushy eyebrows like silkworms,

dressed in a green robe and golden armor. He wielded the Blue Dragon sword, rode the Red Hare steed, and his hand stroked a long flowing beard. Now the young man knew who had saved him. It was his own father, Lord Guan!

Guan Xing was astonished. But his father suddenly pointed southeast and said, “My son, go quickly along that road and I will guard you to your camp.”

With that the figure disappeared. Guan Xing took the road shown by his father and hastened along. About midnight he saw a cohort advancing to meet him, and recognized his cousin Zhang Bao.

“Have you seen my second uncle?” asked Zhang Bao.

“How did you know?” asked Guan Xing.

“I was pursued by the iron chariots when I suddenly saw him coming down from the sky, and he frightened the pursuers away. Then he told me to come along this road to rescue you. So I came.”

Thereupon Guan Xing related what had happened to him. Both sighed in wonder.

They quickly gained the camp, where they were met by Ma Dai.

“There is no way to overcome these men,” said Ma Dai. “Let me hold the camp here while you go back and ask the commander what to do.”

The two went at once to see Zhuge Liang, to whom they gave a full account of what had happened. Zhuge Liang at once sent off Zhao Yun and Wei Yan to set up an ambush. After this he went back with the two cousins to Ma Dai's camp, taking with him 30,000 men and two more officers, Jiang Wei and Zhang Yi. On the following day, from a hilltop he surveyed the country. The line of iron chariots seemed endless and the enemy, men and horses, moved along at great speed.

"It's not difficult to destroy these chariots," said Zhuge Liang.

He called up Ma Dai and Zhang Yi and gave them certain secret orders.

After they were gone, he turned to Jiang Wei and asked, "Do you know how to overcome the iron chariots?"

"These tribesmen depend only on brute force or courage," replied Jiang Wei. "How could they understand clever strategies?"

"You're indeed after my own heart," said Zhuge Liang, smiling. "Those dark clouds and the strong north wind mean imminent snow. I can put my plan to work."

So Guan Xing and Zhang Bao were sent to wait in ambush while Jiang Wei was ordered to lead his men out to battle—but he was to retreat as soon as he saw the iron chariots. When they left he evacuated the remaining troops from the camp but had flags placed at its entrance to make a false show of occupation. With that he completed his preparations for the plan he was to implement.

It was then winter, end of the twelfth month of the year. And truly enough, a heavy snow started to fall. Jiang Wei led his men out to offer battle, but when Yueji came up with his iron chariot troops, he immediately retreated and thus induced the Qiang troops to follow him to the gate of the Shu camp. Here, Jiang Wei disappeared behind the camp. The tribesmen halted at the entrance and looked round. They heard inside the camp someone strumming a lute, and saw flags all around, but there were no soldiers in sight. Hurriedly they went to report this to Yueji, who, suspecting some ruse, dared not advance. But his comrade, Yadan, urged him to attack.

"It's Zhuge Liang's trick," said Yadan. "He pretends that he has deployed troops to mislead us but in fact there are none. You had better attack."

So Yueji led his men again to the camp gate, and there he saw Zhuge Liang, with a lute, getting into his carriage. With a small escort he went toward the rear of the camp. The Qiang soldiers rushed forward in pursuit of Zhuge Liang. They followed him to a hollow in the mountains, where they saw the vague shape of the carriage disappearing into a wood.

Yadan, who was contemptuous of the men of Shu, said to Yueji again, "There may be an ambush, but I don't think we need be afraid of these men."

Hence they decided to pursue. Ahead of them they saw Jiang Wei's men hastening off in the snow. Yueji's rage boiled up at this sight, and he urged his men to speed up. Snow had by then filled up the mountain paths, making every part look flat and smooth.

As they pursued, scouts reported that some enemy troops were appearing from the rear of the hills. Again Yadan paid no attention to this, saying, “Even if there is an ambush of a few soldiers, we have nothing to fear.” He urged them to hasten onward.

Suddenly there came a thundering roar as if the hills had cracked and the earth fallen in. The pursuers all tumbled headlong into pits that were invisible in the snow. The iron chariots, which had been hurrying along very fast, could not stop, and they, too, crashed one on top of another into the pits. Those still farther in the rear halted, but just as they were turning about, Guan Xing and Zhang Bao came up, one on either side, and all at once myriads of bolts flew through the air. Then Jiang Wei and two other divisions arrived from behind and the iron chariot troops were thrown into utter confusion.

The Qiang leader, Marshal Yueji, was fleeing toward some valley behind when he encountered Guan Xing, who slew him at the first bout. Prime Minister Yadan was captured by Ma Dai and taken to the main camp. The soldiers scattered and ran for their lives.

The battle being over, Zhuge Liang took his seat in his tent, and Ma Dai brought forth the prisoner. Zhuge Liang told the guards to loosen his bonds, and he gave him wine to refresh him and soothed him with kindly words. Yadan was grateful for this kindness, and felt more so when Zhuge Liang said, “My master, the Emperor of Great Han, has commanded me to destroy those who are in revolt. Why did you help them? I will let you return to your king. Tell him that our two

countries are neighbors and we will maintain everlasting friendship. He must not listen to the words of those rebels."

The Qiang minister was released. He was allowed to take back to his country all the soldiers that had been captured as well as all the chariots, horses, and equipment that had been seized.

The battle over, Zhuge Liang quickly marched his army back to the main camp at Qishan, with Guan Xing and Zhang Bao leading the way. A report was also sent to the capital to announce the victory.

Meanwhile Cao Zhen was anxiously waiting for news of his expected allies. Then a scout came in with the news that the men of Shu had broken camp and were marching away.

"That is because the Qiang troops have attacked," said Guo Huai gleefully, and the two made ready to pursue.

Ahead of them the army of Shu seemed to be fleeing in disorder. Following close behind was Cao Zun, the van leader of Wei. As he pressed on, there suddenly was heard a roll of drums, succeeded by the appearance of a cohort led by Wei Yan, who cried, "Stop! You rebels!"

Caught by surprise, Cao Zun rode forward to fight but in no more than three exchanges he was killed. His colleague Zhu Zan in similar fashion met a force under Zhao Yun, to whose long spear he soon fell victim. The loss of these two van leaders disheartened their commanders, who desired to retreat.

But before they could face about they heard from their rear men shouting, drums beating, and horns blowing. In a moment Guan Xing and Zhang Bao galloped up from two directions and surrounded them. A terrible struggle ensued. Cao Zhen and his colleague finally managed to break through and led the worsted army away. The army of Shu pursued them to the banks of the Wei River, where they took possession of the enemy's camp.

Cao Zhen grieved deeply over the loss of both his van leaders. In a report to the Emperor he related his misfortune and begged for reinforcements.

At the court of Wei the Emperor was informed of the repeated defeats of Cao Zhen and his appeal for help. Cao Rui, alarmed, turned to his ministers for a plan to drive off the enemy.

Hua Xin said, "It is imperative that Your Majesty must lead an expedition. Call together all the nobles and encourage everyone to exert himself. Only thus can the enemy be driven off. If not, Chang'an might be lost and the whole country will be in danger."

Zhong Yao said, "A commander can only subdue his opponent when he is superior in wisdom. As the ancient strategist Sun Tsu once said: 'Know your enemy, know yourself, and every battle is a victory.' In spite of his rich experience in the field, Cao Zhen is no match for Zhuge Liang. Now I would like to recommend a man, and I pledge with the lives of my whole household that he will succeed. I wonder if Your Majesty would allow me to mention his name."

The Emperor replied, “You are a senior minister. If you know any wise man able to repel the enemy, summon him without delay and ease my mind.”

Zhong Yao continued, “Previously Zhuge Liang wanted to invade us, but he was afraid of this man. Therefore he spread rumors to make Your Majesty suspect him and hence dismiss him. Only then did Zhuge Liang dare to attack us. Employ this man again, and Zhuge Liang will withdraw of his own accord.”

“Who is he?” asked Cao Rui.

“General Sima Yi.”

“I have long regretted over this,” sighed Cao Rui. “Where is he now?”

“I hear he is idle at Wancheng.”

An edict was prepared to recall Sima Yi and restore him to his former rank and titles, with an additional title of Commander–Pacificator of the West. He was to command the various forces of Nanyang and start for Chang’an without delay. At the same time the Emperor would also lead an army there. On a fixed date Sima Yi was to get to the city to meet Cao Rui. A messenger bearing the edict was immediately sent to Wancheng.

At this time Zhuge Liang was rejoicing at the victories he had won since the start of the expedition. That day he was in his tent at Qishan, discussing plans with his subordinates, when it was announced that Li Yan, commander at Yongan Palace

near the border to Wu, had sent his son Li Feng to see him. Zhuge Liang was quite alarmed, suspecting an invasion from Wu. He summoned the messenger into his tent to inquire. To his surprise Li Feng replied that he had joyful news to impart.

"What is the joyful news?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"Formerly Meng Da deserted to Wei because there was no other way out for him. At first Cao Pi, who admired him for his talent, treated him very generously, often giving him gifts of fine horses, gold, and pearls, and had even asked him to ride in the imperial carriage. He had also conferred on him distinguished titles, besides appointing him Prefect of Xincheng, in command of the defense of Shangyong and Jincheng, as well as the whole southeast. But when Cao Pi died it all changed. In Cao Rui's court were many who were jealous of his power, and he had no peace, day and night. He often said to his officers that he used to be an officer in Shu and he had been forced to surrender to Wei. Lately he sent his confidant with a letter to see my father and asked him to present his case to you on his behalf. He said that he had intended to defect when the five armies came upon Shu (see Chapter Eighty-Five). Now hearing of your military action against Wei, he proposes to lead the men of the three districts of Jincheng, Xincheng, and Shangyong to seize Luoyang while you capture Chang'an, whereby both Wei capitals will be taken. I have brought with me his messenger and the letters he has written to my father."

This was very good news, and the bearer was fittingly rewarded. But at that moment came the tidings that Cao Rui was leading an army to Chang'an and had recalled the

banished Sima Yi to office. This piece of news alarmed Zhuge Liang not a little.

Surprised at his discomfort, Ma Su asked, “Why are you so alarmed, sir? If Cao Rui comes to Chang’an, we can just capture him. He is nothing.”

Zhuge Liang replied, “It is not Cao Rui but Sima Yi that worries me. Now Meng Da’s proposal will be to no avail if he comes across this man. He is no match for Sima Yi and will be captured. And if he dies, it will be difficult for us to conquer the north.”

“Why not send a dispatch and put Meng Da on his guard then?” suggested Ma Su.

Zhuge Liang approved, and the letter was dispatched immediately. Meng Da was then at Xincheng, anxiously expecting the return of his trusted messenger. One day the man returned and gave him the following letter from Zhuge Liang:

Your letters, which I received recently, have convinced me of your loyalty, and I rejoice very much that you have not forgotten your old friends. If your plan succeeds you will certainly have rendered the greatest service in the restoration of Han. But I scarcely need impress upon you the extreme necessity for caution. Be very careful whom you trust. Be always on your guard! Never lose your vigilance! I hear Cao Rui has recalled Sima Yi and given him the command of the forces in Wancheng and Luoyang. If a word of your plan reaches Sima Yi, he will fall on you first. Therefore take

every precaution and do not regard this as a matter of small importance.

Meng Da smiled after reading the letter. “They say Zhuge Liang is over cautious. From this I can see he certainly is.”

He lost no time in preparing a reply, which he sent by the same messenger. This letter read as follows:

I acknowledge your most esteemed instruction, and I dare not be remiss in my vigilance for a single moment. However, so far as Sima Yi is concerned, I do not think there is any need for anxiety, for Wancheng is eight hundred li from Luoyang and twelve hundred li from here. Should he hear anything of my plan, he would first have to report this to the Emperor of Wei. It would take a month to send a memorial and get a reply. By then my ramparts would be strongly built and my forces posted in the best of positions. Let him come! I have nothing to fear. So rest assured, sir, and wait for my good news of success!

After reading it, Zhuge Liang flung the letter to the ground. Stamping his foot in distress, he said, “Meng Da will surely die at Sima Yi’s hands.”

“Why do you say that?” asked Ma Su.

“Don’t you remember what the Art of War says? ‘Attack before the enemy is prepared; do what the enemy does not expect.’ How can he expect to have a month’s delay? Since he has received Cao Rui’s commission, Sima Yi has the authority to strike wherever there is rebellion. He will not have to wait to submit a memorial. Ten days after he learns of

Meng Da's defection his army will be upon him, and Meng Da will be caught unprepared."

His words convinced Ma Su and the others of the graveness of the situation.

Zhuge Liang at once dispatched the messenger back with an urgent message to Meng Da: "If no action has been taken, do not let any of your colleagues know about your plan. Otherwise, it will fail."

In his idle retreat in Wancheng, Sima Yi heard of the many battles the Wei army had lost to the men of Shu, and the news saddened him. He lifted up his eyes to Heaven and heaved a deep sigh.

He had two sons, Shi and Zhao, both ambitious, and both earnest students of books of war. On that occasion they were standing in attendance beside their father. The elder son asked, "Why do you sigh, Father?"

"What would you young people understand about important matters?"

"Is it because the lord of Wei does not use you?" asked Sima Shi.

"But they will send for you presently," said Sima Zhao, smiling.

The prophecy was not long in fulfillment, for even as he spoke the bearer of the imperial edict was announced.

The edict was duly read to Sima Yi, who immediately set about mobilizing the troops in his own city. Soon afterwards there came a messenger from the Prefect of Jincheng with a secret message for him. Sima Yi took the man into a private chamber and was told in detail of Meng Da's plan to defect. This information had been further verified by the confession of one of Meng Da's confidants, named Li Fu, and his nephew, Deng Xian.

Sima Yi smote his forehead in relief.

"This is the Emperor's great good fortune, high as Heaven itself. Zhuge Liang's victories at Qishan have terrorized all and forced the Emperor to go on an expedition to Chang'an. Should he have failed to use me now, both capitals would be lost when Meng Da strikes. This fellow is surely in league with Zhuge Liang, and if I can seize him before he makes any move, Zhuge Liang will be disheartened and he will retreat."

His elder son urged him to send in a memorial to the Emperor without delay.

"No, that would take a month," replied his father, "and delay would mean failure."

So he gave orders for the army to be ready to advance by double march at once and threatened to punish by death any loiterers. In order to avert suspicion, he first dispatched a messenger with his letter to Meng Da in Xincheng, telling him to prepare his forces to join the expedition against the men of Shu.

Sima Yi quickly departed. After two days' march, the army came across Xu Huang emerging from behind a hill with his men.

Seeing his comrade, Xu Huang said, "The Emperor has arrived at Chang'an to command the battle against Shu. Where are you going, Commander?"

Sima Yi replied in a low voice, "Meng Da is plotting a rebellion, and I'm going to seize him."

"Let me be your van leader."

So the two forces merged, with Xu Huang in the vanguard, Sima Yi in the center, and his two sons bringing up the rear.

Two days later, scouts from the vanguard captured Meng Da's confidential messenger, and found on him Zhuge Liang's letter. Sima Yi promised to spare the man's life if he would tell all he knew. The man had no alternative but to confess. He told Sima Yi everything about the letters and messages he had passed from one to the other.

Then Sima Yi read Zhuge Liang's letter. Startled by its content, he said, "All able men see things in the same light. Zhuge Liang has already foreseen my tactic. Thanks to the good fortune of the Emperor, his letter has fallen into my hands. Now Meng Da will be helpless."

The army pressed on still more rapidly.

Meng Da had arranged with the prefects of the two cities of Jincheng and Shangyong to strike the blow on a certain date.

But these two were only pretending to abet him. Every day they busied themselves training and drilling their men to keep up appearances, while secretly waiting for the arrival of Sima Yi, to whom they would render help. To Meng Da they said falsely that they dared not fix a date for the military action as they needed more time to prepare arms and supplies. And he believed them.

Just then Sima Yi's messenger came, and when he had been welcomed into the city, he delivered Sima Yi's order and said, "Commander Sima has received the edict of the Emperor to call in all the forces in this district, and he has sent me to direct you to hold your men in readiness to march to Chang'an."

"On what day will the commander start?" asked Meng Da.

"He is just about starting for Chang'an now," replied the messenger.

Meng Da smiled inwardly, for, this being so, he foresaw success. He gave a banquet to treat the messenger and then escorted him out of the city. When he returned he at once sent the two prefects an urgent message: "Tomorrow we will take the field. Change the banners of Wei to those of Han. We will seize Luoyang straight away."

Suddenly it was reported that a great cloud of dust was seen in the distance and an army seemed to have come from nowhere. Meng Da was surprised and went up the wall to see for himself. To his great alarm he found the army carrying the banner of General Xu Huang. He at once ordered his men to raise the drawbridge. Xu Huang failed to rein in his horse,

which still rushed on and finally carried his master to the edge of the moat.

There he called out, “Yield quickly, Meng Da! You traitor!”

Meng Da, in a rage, drew his bow and shot Xu Huang in the head. He was rescued by his colleagues. Then many more arrows were shot from the wall, forcing the men of Wei to retreat. Meng Da was just going to open the gate and pursue when the whole of Sima Yi’s army appeared, and their banners stood so thick on every side that they dimmed the sunlight.

Meng Da, looking up to Heaven, sighed in deep remorse, “Just as Zhuge Liang had warned me!”

Then the gates were closed and a firm defense ensued.

Meanwhile the wounded general, Xu Huang, had been borne to his tent, where the arrow head was extracted and the physician was summoned to attend to him. But that night he died. He was fifty-nine years old. His remains were put in a coffin and sent to Luoyang for burial.

The next day, when Meng Da mounted the wall, he saw the city surrounded as tightly as a barrel bound by iron hoops. He was greatly perturbed and did not know what to do. Suddenly, however, he saw two bodies of troops coming up, their banners bearing the names of the two prefects. Thinking that they had come to help, he opened the gate and led his own men out to join them in battle.

But the two shouted to him, “Stay and be slain quickly, you rebel!”

Realizing that they had been false, he turned back toward the city, but from the wall came a flight of arrows, and the two who had betrayed him, Li Fu and Deng Xian, began to abuse him.

“We have already yielded the city,” they cried.

Meng Da fought his way out and fled. But he was pursued, and as he and his horse were both exhausted he was soon overtaken and slain. He was beheaded, and his soldiers submitted. Sima Yi was welcomed into the city. After pacifying the people and rewarding the soldiers he sent a report of the victory to Cao Rui.

Pleased, Cao Rui ordered the head of Meng Da to be exposed in the city of Luoyang, and he promoted the two prefects and assigned them posts in Sima Yi’s army. The two men who had betrayed Meng Da were given command of the cities of Xincheng and Shangyong.

Then Sima Yi marched to Chang’an, where he camped his army outside the city while he himself went inside to see the Emperor.

Cao Rui said, “For a while I was confused in mind and I fell victim to the enemy’s plot to discredit you. But it is too late to regret now. Had it not been for you suppressing Meng Da’s revolt, the two capitals would have been lost.”

Sima Yi replied, “When I got the information of his intended revolt, I had meant to obtain Your Majesty’s permission first. Since that would mean a long delay, I did not await Your Majesty’s order but set forth at once. Otherwise I would have fallen for Zhuge Liang’s trick.”

Then he produced Zhuge Liang’s letter to Meng Da. After reading it, the Emperor praised him as being more knowledgeable than the two greatest strategists of old, Sun Tsu and Wu Qi. He also gave him a pair of gold axes, with the power to take immediate actions in important matters without first obtaining sanction. Then he ordered him to lead his men out of the pass to repel the men of Shu.

Sima Yi said, “I would like to recommend a general to be the van leader.”

The Emperor asked him who he meant.

“Zhang He.”

“Just the man I wished to appoint for the post,” said Cao Rui, smiling.

And Zhang He was assigned the job and left Chang’an with Sima Yi to combat the army of Shu.

By strategy the leader shows his skill;
He needs bold fighting men to work his will.

Which side would win the battle will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-FIVE

Ignoring Wang Ping's Advice, Ma Su Loses Jieting

Playing the Lute, Zhuge Liang Repulses Sima Yi

After appointing Zhang He as van leader of Sima Yi's army and sending them off, Cao Rui also dispatched two other officers, Xin Pi and Sun Li, with 50,000 men to assist Cao Zhen.

Sima Yi and his 200,000-strong army marched out of the pass and made a camp. Then he sent someone to invite Zhang He to his tent and said to him, "Zhuge Liang is a man of caution. He never acts rashly. If I were in his place I would advance through the Meridian Valley to capture Hangan and so save much time. It is not that he is unskillful, but he fears lest that plan might miscarry, and he won't take risks. Therefore he'll certainly come through Ye Valley to seize Meicheng. To do that, he will divide his force into two, one part to take Meicheng and the other to take the Ji Valley. I have sent a message to Cao Zhen telling him to hold Meicheng at any cost and not to go out and give battle. I have also ordered Sun Li and Xin Pi to block the pass to Ji Valley, and should the enemy come they are to make a sudden raid."

"By what road will you advance, General?" asked Zhang He.

“I have known all along that west of Qinling Hills is a road called Jieting. Close by stands the city of Lieliu. These two places are the very throat of Hanzhong. Zhuge Liang will expect Cao Zhen to be unprepared and will certainly cut through by that road. You and I will go straight to seize Jieting, from where it is but a short distance to Yangping Pass; when Zhuge Liang hears that the route through Jieting is sealed and his supplies cut off, he will know that the area around Longxi is in danger, and will hasten back to Hanzhong. The moment he starts to withdraw, I will intercept him on some byroads, and thus gain a complete victory. If he doesn’t retreat, then I will post troops to close all the byroads, and so cut his supply route. A month’s starvation will kill all the men of Shu, and Zhuge Liang will be my prisoner.”

Zhang He considered the scheme and, bowing to the ground, he expressed his admiration for his chief’s wonderful prevision.

Sima Yi continued, “However, it is not to be forgotten that Zhuge Liang is quite different from Meng Da, and you, as leader of the van, will have to advance with utmost discretion. You must impress upon your officers the importance of reconnoitering a long way ahead and only advancing when they are sure there is no ambush. Any laxity will make you the victim of some ruse of Zhuge Liang’s.”

Zhang He, having received his instructions, departed with his troops.

Meanwhile away at Qishan, a spy returning from Xincheng had reported to Zhuge Liang the destruction of Meng Da and

the approaching of Sima Yi's army, with Zhang He as van leader.

Zhuge Liang was very distressed. "Meng Da failed to observe secrecy and his destruction was certain," he said. "But now Sima Yi will surely seize Jieting and block the most essential road to us. Who will go and defend it?"

Ma Su offered himself instantly.

Zhuge Liang said, "Small as it is, Jieting is of vital importance, for its loss would involve the destruction of the whole army. Although you're well-versed in strategy, the defense of this place may still baffle you, since it has neither walls nor natural defenses."

"I have studied the books of war since childhood, and I may say I know a little of the art of war," replied Ma Su. "How can I be unable to hold Jieting?"

"Sima Yi is not an ordinary commander, and he also has Zhang He, who is a famous general of Wei, as his van leader. I'm afraid you may not be a match for him."

Ma Su replied, "I will have no fear even if Cao Rui himself comes, let alone these two. If I fail, I am willing to pay the penalty of the death of my whole family."

"There is no jesting in war," said Zhuge Liang.

"I will give a written pledge."

Zhuge Liang agreed, and a written pledge was submitted and placed on record.

Zhuge Liang continued, “I’m going to give you 25,000 veterans and also an officer of rank to assist you.”

Next he summoned Wang Ping and said, “I’m entrusting you with this heavy responsibility, for I know you have always been a man of extreme caution. You must hold Jieting with the utmost care. Be sure to set your camp in the most commanding position so that the enemy can’t sneak by. When you have secured your position, draw a map of the topography of the surrounding area and send it to me at once. You two must confer with each other over everything. Never take any rash action. If you can hold this place successfully, yours will be the best service in the capture of Chang’an. So be very, very careful.”

The two bowed to him and took their leave. After they were gone Zhuge Liang, for fear some slip might occur with these two, called Gao Xiang to him and said: “Northeast of Jieting is a place named Lieliu, built on little-used hill paths. There you are to camp and make a stockade. Take 10,000 men for this task. Should Jieting be threatened, you must go to its rescue.”

After Gao Xiang had left, Zhuge Liang reflected that Gao Xiang would not be able to withstand Zhang He and a major general was needed to camp beside Jieting to ensure its safety. So he summoned Wei Yan and told him to encamp his troops to the rear of Jieting.

But Wei Yan was unhappy about this assignment. “As leader of the van I should go first against the enemy—why am I sent to a place where there is nothing to do?”

“Fighting the enemy in the forefront is the job of minor officers. Now I’m sending you to support Jieting, which is the most crucial route to Yangping Pass, the very throat of the whole of Hanzhong. It’s a task of vital importance and not at all an idle one. Don’t regard it as of no significance and spoil my whole plan. Be particularly watchful.”

Satisfied, Wei Yan went his way. At last Zhuge Liang’s mind was at rest. Then he sent for Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi, to whom he said, “With Sima Yi in command of the Wei army everything is different. I want each of you to lead a force out by Ji Valley as decoys to mislead the enemy. When you meet them you can give battle or avoid fighting. Either way, you will strike terror into them. I’m going to lead the main army through Ye Valley to take Meicheng. If that place is taken, Chang’an will fall.”

Following the instruction, the two also left. Finally Zhuge Liang ordered Jiang Wei to lead the vanguard of the main army and march out through Ji Valley.

In the meantime, Ma Su and Wang Ping had reached Jieting and examined the terrain. Ma Su smiled. “The minister is over-anxious, I think. How would the Wei army dare to come to such a hilly place as this?”

Wang Ping replied, “Though they might not dare to come, we should set our camp at this intersection of all the roads and

order the soldiers to fell trees and build a strong stockade for a prolonged defense."

But Ma Su was opposed to this idea. "What sort of a place is that to pitch a camp? Over there is a single, wood-covered hill. An ideal point of vantage! We should camp on that hill."

"No, I'm afraid you're mistaken," replied Wang Ping. "If we camp on the road and build a strong wall the enemy can't possibly get past, even though they amount to 100,000. If we abandon this crucial point for the hill, and if the men of Wei come in full force and surround us on all sides, how can we hope to defend ourselves?"

"That's the view of a woman," said Ma Su, laughing loudly. "The Art of War says, 'Occupying an elevation to look downward on your enemy, you can smash them as easily as splitting a bamboo.' If the men of Wei come I'll see to it that none of them ever returns."

"I've followed the prime minister in many a campaign, and benefited much from his careful instructions every time. To my mind this hill is a hopeless point. If the enemy cuts off our water supply chaos will arise among our men."

"What nonsense," said Ma Su. "The famous strategist Sun Tzu says, 'Place your men in a desperate position and victory ensues.' If they cut off our water supply, won't our men be desperate and fight to the death? Then each one of them will be worth a hundred. I have the books of war at my finger tips, and the minister has often asked me for my advice. Why do you presume to oppose me?"

“If you insist, then give me part of the force to make a small camp to the west of the hill so that I can support you in case the enemy comes.”

But Ma Su refused. Just then inhabitants of the hills came running along saying that the Wei soldiers were approaching. Hearing this Wang Ping proposed to leave for the main road, but Ma Su said to him: “Since you won’t obey me, I’ll give you 5,000 men and you can go and make your own camp, but when I report my success to the prime minister you shall have no share of the merit.”

Wang Ping marched about ten li from the hill and set his camp. He drew a map of their positions and sent it quickly to Zhuge Liang with a full report of Ma Su’s insistence on camping on the hill.

In the city, Sima Yi sent his younger son to reconnoiter the road ahead and to find out if Jieting had a garrison. He would halt the advance if the place was defended. The son returned with the information that there was a garrison in Jieting.

“Zhuge Liang is really more than human,” sighed his father. “He’s too clever for me.”

“Why are you so despondent, father? I think Jieting is quite easy to capture.”

“Why do you dare to boast so?”

“Well, there is no stockade on the road and the enemy is all camped on a hill,” said Sima Zhao. “I have seen it myself, so I know it can be captured.”

“If so, then Heaven means a victory for me,” said his father, greatly pleased.

So he changed dress and rode out with a hundred cavalrymen to see for himself. It was a clear night and the moon shone brightly. Sima Yi went straight to the hill and thoroughly surveyed the neighborhood.

From the hilltop Ma Su saw him, but only laughed. “If he wants to keep alive he shouldn’t try to surround this hill.”

He then issued an order to his officers that in case the enemy came they were to rush downhill on all sides as soon as they saw a red flag waving at the summit.

Back in his camp, Sima Yi sent people to find out who commanded in Jieting and was told that it was Ma Su, brother of Ma Liang.

“A man of unwarranted reputation and mediocre ability,” said Sima Yi. “Zhuge Liang uses such an imbecile. How can he not fail?”

Then he asked if there were any other camps near the place, and scouts told him that Wang Ping was about ten li off. So Zhang He was told to go and watch Wang Ping. With two forces, Shen Dan and Shen Yi were to surround the hill. They were instructed to seal the road to the water supply first, to cause confusion in the Shu camp and attack when that occurred.

The next day, Zhang He led his men out and placed his troop between Wang Ping and the hill. Then Sima Yi proceeded with his mighty force to encircle the hill on every side.

From the summit Ma Su could see the entire field covered with the men of Wei, their banners and ranks in strict order. The sight shrunk the courage of the men of Shu. They dared not descend to attack, although the red flag signaled for them to move. The officers pushed one another, but no one dared to go first. Furious, Ma Su himself cut down two officers, which frightened the others, who then plucked up their courage to descend and try to break the Wei formation. But the men of Wei held fast, and the men of Shu had to retreat back to the hill. Seeing that his scheme did not work, Ma Su ordered his men to firmly guard the gates till help should arrive.

When Wang Ping saw the arrival of the enemy he started for the hill to aid his comrade, but was intercepted by Zhang He. After exchanging scores of bouts, Wang Ping, exhausted, was compelled to retreat from where he had come.

The men of Wei maintained a close siege all day. Without water, the men on the hill were unable to prepare food, and disorder broke out. By midnight the situation deteriorated to such a point that the troops on the south side went out to surrender to the enemy. Ma Su was unable to check them. At this Sima Yi ordered his men to light fire on the hillside, which led to still greater confusion in the beleaguered garrison. At last Ma Su, realizing that it was impossible to hold his position, had to lead his remaining force down the hill to attempt to escape toward the west.

Sima Yi allowed him to pass, but Zhang He pursued him for over thirty li. But then there came an unexpected roll of drums and blowing of horns. Zhang He was stopped by a force led by Wei Yan, and Ma Su was able to continue his escape. Whirling up his sword, Wei Yan dashed toward Zhang He, who at once turned to flee. Wei Yan followed, intending to recapture Jieting.

The pursuit continued for fifty li, when Wan Yan suddenly found himself in an ambush, with Sima Yi on one side and his younger son on the other. Both closed in behind him, and he was trapped. At this Zhang He also turned back, and the attack now came from three sides. Wei Yan tried desperately to break through from the right and the left but all his efforts failed to get him clear. Many of his men were lost. Just as the situation became most critical, help appeared in the person of Wang Ping.

Wei Yan was relieved as he saw Wang Ping coming up. Together the two fought back against the men of Wei and drove them off. Then Wei Yan and Wang Ping made all haste back to their own camp, only to find it already in the hands of the enemy. As the two Shens rushed out to attack, Wei Yan and his colleague headed toward Lieliu to seek refuge with Gao Xiang, who had heard of the loss of Jieting and had led all his men out to the rescue. On the way he fell in with his two comrades and was told what had happened.

Gao Xiang said, “Why don’t we launch a night attack on the Wei camp and recover Jieting?” This proposal was accepted and the three mapped out their plan. When darkness fell they set out along three roads. Wei Yan was the first to reach Jieting, only to find it completely deserted. Filled with

apprehension, he dared not advance boldly but waited quietly at the mouth of the road for his colleagues. Soon Gao Xiang arrived, and they both speculated as to the whereabouts of their enemy.

While they were puzzling over this and wondering what had become of Wang Ping, a bomb exploded loudly, followed by a dazzling fire that lit up the sky and a deafening rolling of drums that seemed to rend the earth. The enemy appeared. In a trice the men of Shu found themselves hemmed in. Both leaders pushed here and shoved there, but could find no way out. Then most opportunely, from behind a hill rolled out a thunder of shouting, and there was Wang Ping coming to their rescue. Then the three forced their way to Lieliu. But just as they drew near to the ramparts another body of men came up—and the lettering on their flags indicated they were from Guo Huai's army.

Now Guo Huai and Cao Zhen were afraid that Sima Yi might gain all the credit. So after taking counsel with each other, they decided to detail Guo Huai to seize Jieting. Hearing that the place was already captured, he had decided to come and seize Lieliu, where he was met by the three officers of Shu. A fierce battle followed between the two sides, during which a great many Shu soldiers lost their lives. Wei Yan, fearing that Yangping Pass might be in danger, suggested abandoning Lieliu and hurried with his two colleagues toward the pass.

Guo Huai, pleased with his success, gathered in his army after the victory and said to his officers, "Although I failed to seize Jieting, I've taken this place, and that's also a merit of high order."

Thereupon he proceeded to the city gates. Just as he approached, a bomb exploded on the wall, and, looking up, he saw the rampart be-decked with flags. On the largest banner he read: SIMA YI, COMMANDER OF THE EXPEDITION TO CONQUER THE WEST. At that moment Sima Yi himself appeared. Lifting a suspended board and leaning against a breast-high wooden rail he laughed and inquired, "Why are you so late, General Guo?"

"You're indeed wonderful in your calculations," admitted Guo Huai.

Then he entered the city and the two exchanged greetings.

Sima Yi said, "Zhuge Liang is sure to withdraw now that he's lost Jieting. General, you and Commander Cao should pursue him quickly."

Guo Huai took the advice and left the city immediately.

Sima Yi called Zhang He to whom he said, "He and Cao Zhen were afraid that I would win all the merit, so they tried to get ahead of me here. Not that I wanted to ascribe all the credit to myself, but it was just good luck. I anticipated Wei Yan and the others would first try to secure Yang-ping Pass, and if I went to take it, Zhuge Liang would attack our rear. The Art of War says, 'Do not attack a retreating enemy nor pursue a desperate foe.' Now you go along some byroad to intercept those withdrawing from Ji Valley, while I go and oppose those from Ye Valley. If they flee, don't fight with them, but just hold them up in the middle and you will be able to capture their supply wagons."

Zhang He marched away with half the force to carry out his part of this plan, while Sima Yi gave an order to go to Ye Valley by way of West City. Though a small place, West City was important as a depot of stores for the Shu army, beside commanding the road to the three districts of Nanan, Tianshui, and Anding. If this place could be seized the other three would be recaptured by Wei. Therefore, leaving the two Shens to guard Lieliu, Sima Yi marched his army toward Ye Valley.

Now let us return to Zhuge Liang at Qishan. After he had sent Ma Su to guard Jieting he was undecided what to do next. One day a messenger arrived with Wang Ping's map. Zhuge Liang opened it.

"How stupid Ma Su is! He will be the ruin of our army!" he cried while he looked at it, striking the desk in extreme alarm.

"Why are you so disturbed, sir?" asked those near him.

"By this sketch I see that instead of commanding the main road he has chosen to camp on a hill. If the men of Wei come in force to surround our army and cut off our water supply, in less than two days our army will be in chaos. If Jieting is lost how will we be able to return?"

Here Yang Yi said, "I know I'm not very talented, but let me go and replace Ma Su."

Zhuge Liang explained to him in detail how and where to camp, but before he could start a galloping horseman brought the news of the loss of both Jieting and Lieliu.

In despair, Zhuge Liang stamped his feet and sighed deeply. "The whole scheme has come to naught, and it is my fault."

He sent for Guan Xing and Zhang Bao at once and said to them, "You two take 3,000 men each and go along some byroads in Wugong Hills. If you fall in with the enemy, don't fight but only beat drums and raise a hubbub to scare them away. Let them retreat and don't pursue, either. When our army has completely withdrawn, make for Yangping Pass without delay."

Then he sent Zhang Yi to prepare Sword Pass for a general retreat and issued an order informing all officers and men to secretly pack up to get ready for withdrawal. He also assigned Ma Dai and Jiang Wei to guard the rear, telling them to place themselves in ambush in a valley and not to call back their soldiers till the main army had retreated. Having completed these arrangements, he sent trusted men to Tianshui, Nanan, and Anding with the order that all officials, soldiers, and people were to move into Hanzhong. He also saw to it that Jiang Wei's aged mother was safely conducted to Hanzhong.

All these arrangements made, Zhuge Liang led 5,000 men to West City to remove the supplies. Suddenly messengers galloped in more than a dozen times with the terrible report that Sima Yi was advancing rapidly toward the city with his huge army of 150,000 soldiers.

At this point, no officer of rank was at Zhuge Liang's side, but only the civil officials. As for the 5,000 men, half of them had been sent to remove the grain and forage, so all he had in the city was 2,500 men. The officials all turned pale with fright at the news. Ascending the wall, Zhuge Liang himself

went to take a look. There he saw clouds of dust rising into the sky and the men of Wei pressing toward the city along two roads.

Then Zhuge Liang gave the following order: “Remove from sight all the banners and flags. Every sentinel must remain in position. Any person who dares to walk in and out of the city without permission, or raise his voice to speak or shout, will be instantly put to death. Open all the four gates and set twenty soldiers dressed as ordinary people cleaning the streets at each gate. Do not stir if the Wei army comes. I have a plan to drive them off.”

When everything was done according to his instructions he donned his white cloak, put on his silk headdress and, attended by two lads carrying his lute, he sat down on the wall in front of the turret. With his lute beside him and a stick of incense burning, he began to play the instrument.

Soon Sima Yi’s reconnaissance troops approached the city gate, and puzzled by the sight they dared not enter the city, but hastened back to report what they had seen to Sima Yi, who smiled incredulously. But he halted his army and rode ahead to see for himself. Lo! it was exactly as the scouts had described—Zhuge Liang, his face radiant with smiles, was seated high on the wall strumming his lute and burning incense. A lad stood on his left bearing a sword and another on his right holding a horsetail whisk. Around the gates some twenty people with their heads down seemed to be engrossed in sweeping the ground, as if no one else were about.

Filled with suspicion, Sima Yi thought this indicated some peculiarly subtle ruse. So he rode back, faced his army about, and ordered retreat by the road toward the northern hills.

"Could it be there is no army behind his show," said his second son. "Why do you retreat so soon, father?"

"Zhuge Liang is always most cautious and never takes chances. Those open gates undoubtedly mean an ambush, and if our men enter the city they will fall victims to his guile. How can you people understand? Our best course is to retreat at once."

Thus the two armies of Wei both left West City, much to the joy of Zhuge Liang, who laughed and clapped his hands as he saw them hastening away. The officials, still gasping with terror, asked Zhuge Liang to explain why Sima Yi, a famous Wei general commanding a massive army, should retreat quickly at the sight of him.

Zhuge Liang replied, "He knows my reputation for caution and that I never court danger. Seeing things as they were, he suspected an ambush and so turned away. I didn't mean to take a risk but this time there was no alternative. Now he will surely take the byroad to the northern hills. I have already sent Guan Xing and Zhang Bao there to wait for him."

Amazed at the depth of his foresight they said in awe: "Sir, your schemes and plans are truly unfathomable, even to gods or spirits. We would simply have abandoned the city and fled."

“What chance of escape would we have with only 2,500 men? We would not have gone far before we were caught by Sima Yi.”

A lute three feet long conquered a mighty army
When Zhuge Liang made his foe retreat at West City.
Where the hundred and fifty thousand men had turned
Men of today still point with wonder in mind.

“But if I had been in his place I would not have departed so fast,” said Zhuge Liang, laughing and clapping his hands again.

Then he gave an order that the people of the place should follow the army into Hanzhong, for Sima Yi would assuredly return. They abandoned West City and started toward Hanzhong. In due course all the inhabitants of the three districts of Tianshui, Nanan, and Anding also followed in that direction.

Meanwhile, Sima Yi led his army to retreat along some byroad in the Wugong Hills. Presently there came the shouting of men and beating of drums from behind some slopes. Turning to his two sons, he remarked, “If we had not retreated we would have fallen into Zhuge Liang’s trap.”

There soon appeared a force on the road, a big banner bearing the name of Zhang Bao. The men of Wei were seized with sudden panic and ran, flinging off their armor and throwing away their weapons. But before they had fled very far they heard fresh sounds indicating the arrival of an army in the valley and soon saw another force, with a banner inscribed with the name of Guan Xing. As the valley echoed the roaring

sound, they could not fathom how many Shu troops there were bearing down on them. Suspicion gripped them, hurrying them along in their retreat and forcing them to abandon their supply wagons. Strictly observing Zhuge Liang's order, Guan Xing and Zhang Bao did not pursue, but only gathered up the spoils. Then they returned home.

Seeing the valley apparently full of the men of Shu, Sima Yi dared not leave the main road. He hurried back to Jieting.

At this time Cao Zhen, hearing that the army of Shu was retreating, went in pursuit. But on the way he encountered a strong force under Ma Dai and Jiang Wei, and the fields and hills seemed to swarm with their troops. Cao Zhen, alarmed beyond measure, hastened to pull back, but his van leader was already slain by Ma Dai. He led his men to flee in panic.

Now that they had frightened off the men of Wei, the withdrawal of the Shu army occured in full force. That very night the soldiers all retreated to Hanzhong.

Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi, who had been lying in ambush in Ji Valley, also received Zhuge Liang's order to retreat. Zhao Yun said, "The men of Wei will surely come to smite us when they hear we are retreating. Let me first take up a position in their rear while you lead our men to withdraw slowly, showing my ensign. I will protect you on the way."

Now Guo Huai was leading his army through Ji Valley. He sent for his van leader Su Yong and said to him, "Zhao Yun is a very brave warrior whom none can withstand. You must be on your guard against any ruse the enemy might employ while they retreat."

Su Yong replied joyfully, “If you will help me, Commander, I will capture this Zhao Yun.”

So Su Yong, with 3,000 men, hastened to the valley in the wake of the Shu army. He saw upon a slope in the distance a large red banner bearing the name of Zhao Yun. This frightened him, and he pulled back. But before he had gone far a great uproar arose about him and a mighty warrior came bounding forth on a swift steed, crying, “Do you recognize Zhao Zi-long?”

Su Yong was startled. “How come here is another Zhao Yun.”

Before he could defend himself he fell victim to the spear of the veteran. His men scattered, and Zhao Yun hurried on after the main body.

But soon another band came in pursuit, this time led by Wan Zheng, one of Guo Huai’s officers. Seeing them come along in hot pursuit Zhao Yun halted in the middle of the road and waited to fight with his opponent. By the time Wan Zheng had caught up the other Shu soldiers had gone about thirty li ahead. Wan Zheng, recognizing who it was standing in his path, dared not advance. Zhao Yun waited until dusk when he turned and moved ahead at a slow pace.

Presently Guo Huai came up. Wan Zheng told him that Zhao Yun was as heroic as before and so he had not dared to press on. Guo Huai at once ordered him to press on with the pursuit. So together with several hundred cavalrymen Wan Zheng rode forth. Presently they came to a big wood, and suddenly a loud shout arose in their rear: “Zhao Zi-long is here!”

Terror seized upon the pursuers. Many fell from their horses while others escaped through the hills. Wan Zheng braced himself for the encounter but Zhao Yun shot an arrow that hit the plume of his helmet. Startled, he tumbled into a gully. Pointing at him with his spear, Zhao Yun said: “Be off! I will spare your life. Go and tell your chief to come quickly.”

Wan Zheng fled for his life, while Zhao Yun went on protecting his army and the retreat into Hanzhong continued steadily. There were no other episodes on the way.

The three districts of Tianshui, Nanan, and Anding were taken by Cao Zhen and Guo Huai, who attributed to themselves all the credit of having recovered them.

Sima Yi, on the other hand, divided his army and advanced. But by that time the Shu forces had already reached Hanzhong. He took a small force and rode back to West City, where he made inquiries among the few remaining inhabitants and some hermits. All of them told him that Zhuge Liang only really had 2,500 soldiers and some civil officials, without a single military commander. He also learned from residents in Wugong Hill that Guan Xing and Zhang Bao had only 3,000 men each, whom they placed around the hill, making as much noise as they could to strike terror into their opponents—but they actually dared not fight because they had no reinforcements. Sima Yi was very sorry at having missed an excellent chance.

“I’m no match for Zhuge Liang,” he said with a sigh of resignation.

He set about restoring order, and then marched back to Chang'an. The young Emperor Cao Rui was pleased with his success and said, "It is by your good service that Longxi is again mine."

Sima Yi replied, "The army of Shu is in Hanzhong, not yet thoroughly destroyed. Pray give me a large army to take the whole of Shu so that I can repay Your Majesty for your favor."

Cao Rui rejoiced at his offer and authorized him to raise an army without delay. At this one of the courtiers suddenly said, "I have a plan by which Shu can be overcome and Wu subjugated."

Hardly had the officers of Shu gone home,
The court of Wei planned new schemes again.

Who offered this plan will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-SIX

Weeping in Sorrow, Zhuge Liang Puts Ma Su to Death

Cutting His Hair, Zhou Fang Tricks Cao Xiu

It was Sun Zi who said that he had a plan to reunite the whole of the empire.

"What is your excellent scheme?" asked the Emperor.

Sun Zi said, "In the past when the founder of our dynasty, Cao Cao, went to subdue Zhang Lu, things did not go well with him until later. He used to say to us, 'Hanzhong is really a natural prison. Ye Valley in its center is five hundred li of rocks and caves. It is no place to fight a war.' In addition to this difficulty, we must also guard against Wu. If Your Majesty mobilizes all the armed forces in the country to conquer Shu, then Wu will surely take the opportunity to invade us. To my mind it is better to divide the army among the various generals and assign each to defend a place of strategic significance and train his troops. In a few years our land will be prosperous, while the other two, Shu and Wu, will be at each other's throats. And that will be the best time to attack them. I hope Your Majesty will consider this plan."

Cao Rui consulted Sima Yi about this, who said, "He is perfectly right."

So Cao Rui delegated Sima Yi to deploy the generals and soldiers to various vantage points, but leave Guo Huai and Zhang He to guard Chang'an. After rewarding his men richly he returned to Luoyang.

Back in Hanzhong, Zhuge Liang counted his men and found that all had returned, except Zhao Yun and Deng Zhi. Extremely worried, he told Guan Xing and Zhang Bao to lead one force each to look for them and render assistance if necessary. But before the reinforcing parties left, it was announced that the two had arrived, with their forces in excellent condition, not a single man lost, nor a horse nor any of their equipment missing. Zhuge Liang, greatly pleased, led the whole assembly out to welcome them.

Zhao Yun hastily dismounted and bowed to the earth. "I am but a defeated general and do not deserve your coming out to welcome me, sir."

But Zhuge Liang hastened to help him up and, holding his hand, said: "It was my fault by employing the wrong person that caused the loss. But we have lost officers and men everywhere. How is it, Zi-long, that you have come through unscathed?"

To his inquiry Deng Zhi replied, "Zi-long told me to go ahead, while he guarded the rear and warded off every attack. He slew an officer of Wei, and this frightened the others. Thus neither equipment nor supply were lost or abandoned."

"A really great general!" said Zhuge Liang.

He took fifty catties of gold to reward Zhao Yun and a myriad of rolls of silk for his soldiers. But Zhao Yun declined the gifts, saying, "The army has accomplished nothing, and all of us are guilty. To bestow reward for no merit is against the rules of reward and punishment. Let these be kept in store till winter, when you can distribute them among the men."

"When the late Emperor was alive he often spoke of Zi-long's virtue. How right he was!" said Zhuge Liang, whose respect for the veteran doubled after this.

Then it was announced that Ma Su, Wang Ping, Wei Yan, and Gao Xiang had arrived.

Zhuge Liang first summoned Wang Ping and rebuked him. "I ordered you to guard Jieting with Ma Su—why didn't you remonstrate with him and prevent this great loss?"

"I did reason with him many times. I urged him again and again to build a rampart on the main road and construct a solid camp, but he would not listen and flared up in wrath. So I led 5,000 men to camp some ten li off. Then all at once the men of Wei came and surrounded the hill on all sides. I attempted to break through their siege a dozen times, but I could not penetrate. On the following day the army collapsed entirely and many of the men surrendered. My isolated force was too feeble to stand so I went to seek help from Wei Yan, but we were intercepted midway and trapped in a valley, and only got free by fighting most desperately. By the time we got back to camp, it was already in enemy possession, and so we set out for Lieliu. On the road we met Gao Xiang, and the three of us decided to raid the enemy camp, hoping to recover Jieting. When I found it deserted I grew suspicious. I climbed

a hill to survey the area around and saw Wei Yan and Gao Xiang entangled by the men of Wei, so I went to their rescue. Then we joined forces with Ma Su. For fear lest Yangping Pass might fall to the enemy, we hastened there to defend it. So you see, sir, it was not that I failed to remonstrate with him. And you can ask any of the officers if you doubt my words."

Zhuge Liang dismissed him. Then he sent for Ma Su, who came, having bound himself, and knelt before his chief.

At the sight of him Zhuge Liang changed his countenance. "You have studied books on war ever since you were a boy and you know the strategies of battle thoroughly. I emphasised that Jieting was our key base, and you pledged on the lives of all your family to assume this heavy responsibility. Had you listened to Wang Ping, this catastrophe would not have happened. Now the army is defeated, officers have been slain, and cities and territory lost—all because of you. If I do not execute you in accordance with the military law, how can I maintain a proper state of discipline? You have offended the law and you must pay the penalty. Do not blame me. After your death I will see to it that your family get a monthly allowance of money and grain, so have no anxiety for their sake."

He told the executioners to take him away.

Ma Su replied, weeping, "You, sir, have looked upon me as a son and I have looked up to you as a father. I know I cannot escape the punishment of death, but I beg you to consider how Shun slew Gun, but employed his son Yu.* Then I will

die with no resentment down in the Nine Springs." And he burst into tears.

Zhuge Liang, brushing aside his tears, said, "We have been like brothers, and your son is my own son. Say no more."

They led the doomed man out. Just as they were going to deal the fatal blow, Jiang Wan, a military advisor of rank, came up from the capital. Greatly alarmed at seeing this, he called the executioners to wait a while, and went in to see Zhuge Liang to plead for Ma Su.

"Of old the King of Chu put his general to death, and his enemy Duke Wen rejoiced.† Our great design is still not accomplished and it would be a pity to slay a man of admitted ability."

Zhuge Liang's tears fell as he replied, "In the old days Sun Tzu was invincible in the world because he administered clearly-defined military law. Now war and strife are in every quarter, and if the law is not obeyed, on what grounds are we to launch an expedition against the rebels? He must die."

Soon after the executioners bore in the head of the victim, and Zhuge Liang wept bitterly.

"Why do you weep for him now that he has met the just penalty for his fault?" asked Jiang Wan.

"I'm not weeping for him," said Zhuge Liang. "I recalled the words of our late Emperor. On his death bed at Baidi, he warned me that Ma Su tended to boast, and so was not to be entrusted with important tasks. How true his words were! And

now when I recall what he said to me then, how I hate myself for being so blind! That is why I weep."

Every officer wept when they heard this. Ma Su was but thirty-nine, and he met his end in the fifth month of the sixth year of the reign of Jian Xing.

A poet wrote about him:

'Twas pitiful that Ma Su who talked so glibly
Of warfare, should lose Jieting. For the fault most grave
He paid the law's extreme penalty at the gate.
And his chief recalled the late king's words in deep grief.

The head of the victim was paraded round the camps. Then it was sewn onto the body and the man was buried. Zhuge Liang himself wrote the funeral address and conducted the sacrificial offering. To Ma Su's family he showed particular concern and a monthly allowance of money and grain was provided for them. Then Zhuge Liang prepared a memorial in which he proposed his own degradation from his high office of the prime minister. He asked Jiang Wan to present it to the Second Ruler of Shu.

This is the text of the memorial: "I am but a man of mediocre ability, yet I have received undeserved trust. I was given the authority to command the army, but I was unable to uphold the discipline and enforce the law. Hence there happened the disregard of my order at Jieting and the failure to guard Ji Valley. The fault is mine in that I erred in the use of men. I failed to make sound judgments of people or things. In the ancient book of history, 'Spring and Autumn,' it is written that the commander should bear the responsibility for an

aborted campaign. So I request that I be degraded three ranks as punishment. I cannot express how mortified I feel. Humbly I await your decree."

"Why does the prime minister write these words?" remarked the Emperor after reading it. "Victory or defeat is but the ordinary fortune of war-making."

A courtier named Fei Yi said, "I hear the ruler of a country must value most the enforcement of the law, for without law how can he govern men? It is right that the prime minister should be degraded in rank after his defeat."

The Emperor approved and thereupon an edict was issued reducing Zhuge Liang to the rank of General of the Right, but acting as prime minister in administering state affairs and commanding the military forces. Fei Yi was sent to announce the decree.

Fei Yi bore the edict into Hanzhong and read it to Zhuge Liang, who received it and was thus demoted. Afraid that Zhuge Liang might be mortified, Fei Yi tried to compliment him on his earlier success.

"It was a great joy to the people when they heard of your capture of the four districts," he said.

"What are you talking about?" said Zhuge Liang, annoyed. "Success followed by failure is no success. It humiliates me indeed to hear such a compliment."

"His Majesty was very pleased to hear of your acquisition of Jiang Wei."

This remark also angered Zhuge Liang, who replied, “It is my most grave fault that the army returned defeated without gaining an inch of territory. What injury to the enemy was the loss of Jiang Wei?”

Fei Yi tried again. “With your powerful army of several hundred thousand men are you going to attack Wei again?”

“When we were positioned at Qishan Mountains and Ji Valley we outnumbered the enemy, but we failed to conquer them and were beaten instead. Therefore what matters is not the number of soldiers, but the leadership. Now we must reduce the army, accept the punishment, reflect on our errors, and mend our ways to prepare for the future. Unless these things are done, what is the use of large armies? Hereafter every man who is truly concerned over the future of the country must most diligently point out my mistakes and blame me for my shortcomings. Only thus can our great design be achieved, the rebels exterminated, and success expected.”

Fei Yi and the officers all saw the aptness of these remarks. Having completed his mission Fei Yi soon went back to the capital. Zhuge Liang remained in Hanzhong, where he showed great concern for his army and the people. He also made every preparation for future expeditions, training and heartening his men, constructing special apparatus for attacking cities and crossing rivers, collecting grain and fodder, and building battle rafts.

Spies of Wei learned of these war preparations and reported them to Luoyang. The ruler of Wei at once sent for Sima Yi to consult him on how Shu might be annexed.

“This is not yet the time to attack Shu,” replied Sima Yi. “In this present sultry weather they will not venture out, but if we move deeply into their territory they will hold their strategic points, which we will find it hard to overcome.”

“What are we to do if they invade us again?”

“I have thought about that. I presume next time Zhuge Liang will imitate the Han general Han Xin’s plan and try to cross Chencang secretly. I can recommend a man to guard the place by building a rampart there and rendering it absolutely secure. He is a tall man with powerful, long arms as well as a good archer and prudent strategist. He will be able to deal with an invasion by Zhuge Liang.”

“What is his name?” asked Cao Rui, very pleased.

“He is He Zhao, now in command at Hexi.”

The Emperor approved of his recommendation and an edict was sent to He Zhao, promoting him to the rank of general and ordering him to guard the pass to Chencang.

Soon afterwards, the Emperor received a memorial from Cao Xiu, Minister of War and Commandant of Yangzhou. It said that Zhou Fang, Prefect of Poyang in the Kingdom of Wu, wished to submit his district to Wei, and that he had secretly sent a man to state seven points to illustrate how Wu could be overcome and to urge Wei to dispatch an army there soon. Cao Rui spread the document out on the couch and read it with Sima Yi.

“His points seem quite convincing,” said Sima Yi. “Wu can be destroyed. Let me take an army to help Cao Xiu.”

But from among the courtiers stepped forward Jia Kui, who said, “The men of Wu are deceitful and their words cannot be fully trusted. Zhou Fang is a wise and crafty man and very unlikely to surrender. This must be some plot to lure our soldiers into danger.”

“These words must also be taken into consideration,” said Sima Yi. “Yet such a chance must not be missed.”

In the end the Emperor sent both Sima Yi and Jia Kui to assist Cao Xiu.

A military operation against Wu was launched on three fronts. Cao Xiu, leading a large army, set out to take Wancheng; Jia Kui to seize Yangcheng; and Sima Yi, to attack Jiangling.

Now the ruler of Wu, Sun Quan, was at the East Pass in Wuchang, where he addressed his officials: “The Prefect of Poyang, Zhou Fang, has sent me a secret memorial in which he says that Cao Xiu of Wei intends to invade us. He has therefore set a trap for Cao Xiu and has given him seven reasons why he should lead an army into our territory. Thus the Wei army will be enticed into a heavily-guarded area and destroyed by ambushes. Now the men of Wei are approaching in three divisions, and I need your advice.”

Gu Yong at once recommended Lu Xun. “He is the only man fit to cope with the present situation.”

So Lu Xun was summoned. Apart from receiving several new titles of high honor, he was created Commander of the Royal Corps of Guards and could act for the prince in his imperial duties. He was also given the symbols of authority, the yak-tail banner and the golden ax, and all the officials, civil and military, were placed under his command. Moreover, Sun Quan personally stood beside him and held his whip while he mounted his steed.

Having thanked his lord for all these marks of favor and distinction, Lu Xun obtained his permission to name as his two immediate assistants Zhu Huan and Quan Zong. Then the grand army, comprising over 700,000 men from the 81 districts of the lower reaches of the Yangtze and the Jingzhou region, marched out in three divisions, with Lu Xun in the center and his two assistants on the flanks.

Zhu Huan proposed a plan. “Cao Xiu is not a commander of ability or courage. He was given this office simply because he is a member of the imperial house. Now he has fallen into the trap laid by Zhou Fang and has marched his army deep inside our strongly-defended areas. He will surely be defeated under your attack. Then he will certainly flee along two roads, Jiashi on the left and Guache on the right, both of which are narrow and precipitous. Let Quan Zong and myself each take a force to lie in ambush on these roads and block them with logs and big boulders. As his way of escape will thus be cut off, Cao Xiu can be captured. After that our main force can press on directly to seize Shouchun, from where Xuchang and Luoyang will be within easy reach. This is a chance that comes only once in 10,000 years.”

“I don’t think this plan will work,” said Lu Xun. “I know what to do.”

Zhu Huan withdrew, deeply hurt that his scheme had been rejected. Lu Xun first ordered Zhuge Jin and some others to garrison Jiangling and oppose Sima Yi. Then he deployed the rest of his troops to various positions to await the enemy.

In the meantime, Cao Xiu’s army had arrived at Wancheng and Zhou Fang went to his tent to greet him. Cao Xiu said, “I received your letter lately and I found your seven points most convincing. So I reported it to His Majesty. He has set in motion accordingly three armies. It will be a great merit for you, sir, if the land of Wu can be added to His Majesty’s dominion. But some say you are very crafty and doubt the truthfulness of your words. I believe you will not be false to me.”

Zhou Fang burst into loud wailing. He hastily seized a sword from one of his attendants and made as if he were to kill himself. Cao Xiu quickly stopped him.

Still holding the sword, Zhou Fang said, “Those seven points that I mentioned in my letter came from the very bottom of my heart. How little did I expect they would arouse suspicion! Some Wu people must have been poisoning your mind against me. If you heed these liars the only course for me is to die. Heaven alone knows my loyalty.”

Again he made as if to slay himself. But Cao Xiu in trepidation seized his hand and said, “I was only joking. Why do you take it so seriously?”

Upon this, Zhou Fang, taking his sword, cut off his hair and threw it to the ground. “I have treated you with sincerity, sir, yet you return it with jest. Now I have cut off the hair I inherited from my parents to prove my fidelity.”

Then Cao Xiu doubted no more. He gave a banquet to Zhou Fang, who took his leave when the feast was over. After he left, Jia Kui came to see Cao Xiu, who asked him the reason for his visit.

Jia Kui said, “I believe Wu must have camped its whole army here in Wancheng. So I have come to warn you, Commander, not to risk advancing at once but wait till I can join you in the attack. Then the enemy can be destroyed.”

“You mean you want to share in my victory,” sneered Cao Xiu angrily.

Jia Kui continued, “I also heard that Zhou Fang cut off his hair as a pledge of sincerity but that is only another piece of deceit. He was only imitating Yao Li,* who cut off his own arm to deceive Qing Ji for the purpose of assassinating him. Do not trust him.”

“I am on the verge of beginning my campaign,” cried Cao Xiu, “and you come to utter such ill-omened nonsense to destroy the spirit of my army!”

In his wrath he told the executioners to put Jia Kui to death. However, at the pleading of his officers he agreed to reprieve the death penalty, but retained Jia Kui’s men in the camp as a reserve force. He himself went away to take East Pass. When Zhou Fang heard that Jia Kui had been deprived of his

military command, he said to himself joyfully, “If Cao Xiu attended to his words, we would fail. Heaven is helping me to succeed!”

Then he sent a secret messenger to Wancheng to inform Lu Xun of all this.

Lu Xun assembled his officers and said, “Ahead of us is Shiting where the roads are hilly, but still good enough for laying an ambush. We must get there early to occupy some wide open space to array our army and await the coming of the army of Wei.”

So saying he appointed Xu Sheng as leader of the van, to advance first.

Now Cao Xiu had told Zhou Fang to lead the way for his attack. As they marched he asked Zhou Fang the name of the place lying ahead.

“Shiting,” replied Zhou Fang. “It is a suitable place to camp in.”

Cao Xiu approved. So the army with its wagons of supplies entered Shiting and encamped. The next day scouts reported that a large number of their enemy had occupied the road approaching the hills.

Cao Xiu was alarmed. “Zhou Fang said there were no soldiers—how could they be prepared?”

He hastily sought Zhou Fang to ask him, and was told he had left with several dozen people. No one knew where he had gone.

“I have been deceived,” said Cao Xiu in deep remorse. “However, there is nothing to fear.”

Then he appointed Zhang Pu as van leader and ordered him out with 5,000 men to fight the men of Wu.

Zhang Pu rode forth and shouted, “Surrender quickly, you rebels!”

Xu Sheng rode out and fought with him. Zhang Pu was no match for his opponent, as was soon evident. He fled with his men back to his commander.

“Xu Sheng is too strong,” he said.

“We will defeat him by surprise,” said Cao Xiu.

He told Zhang Pu and Xue Qiao to lead 20,000 men each and lie in ambush to the south and north of Shiting. Then he said to the two officers, “Tomorrow I will lead a thousand men out to challenge. Then I will pretend defeat to cajole the men of Wei to follow me to the foot of the northern hills. At the signal of an explosion, we will attack them on three sides and the victory will be ours.” The two took the order and went to prepare the ambush that night.

On the other side Lu Xun summoned his two assistants, to whom he said: “Each of you is to lead 30,000 men and cut across from Shiting to the rear of the enemy’s camp. Give a

signal of fire on arrival. I will command the main force to advance in the center."

As evening fell these two moved out their men. By the second watch Zhu Huan had got to the rear of the Wei camp, where he encountered Zhang Pu, who was there waiting in ambush. Not knowing the approaching men were enemies, he rode forth to inquire and was at once slain by Zhu Huan. The men of Wei then fled, and Zhu Huan lit his signal fire.

Quan Zong, on the other side, ran into the ambush set by Xue Qiao. A battle followed at once, but the men of Wei suffered great losses and were soon put to flight. Both officers of Wu pursued them to their camp, where confusion reigned and men fought among themselves.

Cao Xiu hastily mounted his horse and fled toward Jiashi. Xu Sheng, with a strong force, came to attack along the high road, killing countless men of the Wei army. Those who escaped all abandoned their armor.

In panic Cao Xiu struggled along the Jiashi Road. Suddenly there came a force from a side path. It was led by Jia Kui. Cao Xiu, slightly relieved, said shamefacedly, "I took no notice of what you advised and I did suffer defeat."

Jia Kui replied, "General, you should quickly get off this road, otherwise if the men of Wu block it with logs and boulders we will be in grave danger."

So Cao Xiu hastened forward while Jia Kui protected the rear. To prevent the men of Wu from pursuing, Jia Kui set up flags and banners in thick woods and along dangerous bypaths, so

as to give an impression of having many men posted all around. When Xu Sheng came he caught glimpses of flags from beneath the slopes and suspected an ambush. So he gave up the pursuit and withdrew. Cao Xiu was thus rescued. When Sima Yi learned about Cao Xiu's defeat, he also withdrew.

In the meantime, Lu Xun was awaiting news of victory. Soon the three officers came and reported their successes. They brought with them great spoil of carts and bullocks, horses and mules and military equipment, as well as a very large number of prisoners. Greatly pleased, Lu Xun with Zhou Fang led the army home into Wu. On their return Sun Quan came out of the city of Wuchang with a numerous cortege of officials to welcome the victors, and an imperial umbrella was borne over the head of Lu Xun as they wended their way into the city. The other officers also received promotions and rewards.

Sun Quan, noticing that Zhou Fang had no hair, consoled him with gracious words. "This deed of yours, and the sacrifice you made to attain it, will surely be recorded in history books."

He conferred on Zhou Fang the title of marquis. Then he gave great feasts to entertain his army in celebration of the victory.

Lu Xun said, "Cao Xiu has been thoroughly beaten, and the men of Wei are cowed. I think now is the time to send an envoy with a letter to Shu and exhort Zhuge Liang to attack Wei."

Sun Quan agreed, and an envoy carrying Sun Quan's letter was sent.

The east, successful in one fight,
Would unto war the west incite.

The fate of Zhuge Liang's next campaign against Wei will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* According to an ancient legend, Emperor Shun executed Gun for failing to control the floods, but later asked Gun's son, Yu, to do the same job. Yu finally succeeded in subduing the flooding river.

† In the period of the Warring States, the King of Chu forced his general to commit suicide after he lost a battle with the Kingdom of Jin. When Duke Wen of Jin heard of this he was overjoyed. Here Jiang Wan uses this story to show Zhuge Liang that the execution of Ma Su would only please their enemy.

* A man in the service of Prince Guang of Wu in ancient China. He was ordered by his master to assassinate his rival Qing Ji, son of the king. Yao Li cut off his own arm and went to see Qing Ji, saying that Prince Guang had severed his limb. Thus he was able to win Qing Ji's trust and finally slew him.

CHAPTER NINETY-SEVEN

Zhuge Liang Proposes to Renew the Attack on Wei

Jiang Wei Defeats Wei by Means of a Forged Letter

It was in the autumn of the sixth year of Jian Xing in Shu that the Wei army was thoroughly beaten by Lu Xun of Wu. Cao Xiu's mortification brought on an illness from which he died in Luoyang. By command of the Emperor, he received a most honorable burial.

When Sima Yi returned with his army he was welcomed into the city by the other officers.

"Commander, you were also responsible for General Cao's defeat," they said. "Why did you hurry home?"

Sima Yi replied, "I suspect Zhuge Liang will take advantage of our defeat to seize Chang'an. If the west is in danger, who can go to its rescue?"

But the officers sniggered as they withdrew, thinking he was cowardly.

Meanwhile, Wu's envoy had presented his lord's letter to Shu, proposing a joint attack on Wei and detailing their recent victory. The intention behind this letter was two-fold: to

exhibit their own power and to strengthen friendly relations. The Second Ruler of Shu was pleased and sent the letter to Zhuge Liang in Hanzhong.

At that time the army was in every readiness for a new expedition. The men were strong and the horses sturdy; supplies of grain and fodder were plentiful; and all kinds of necessary equipment had been prepared. Zhuge Liang was just going to propose a new operation when he received the letter from Wu.

Zhuge Liang assembled all his subordinates to discuss a new expedition. Suddenly a gust of wind blew up from the northeast corner and snapped a pine tree in the courtyard. It was an inauspicious omen and all those present were alarmed. Zhuge Liang made a divination and presently announced that the wind portended the loss of a great general. The others were doubtful, though. But before the banquet ended it was announced that two sons of Zhao Yun had come and wished to see Zhuge Liang.

Zhuge Liang, in great alarm, threw down his wine cup and cried, “Alas! Zi-long is no more.”

The two sons came in, prostrated themselves before him and wept. “Father’s illness worsened last night and he died at the third watch.”

Zhuge Liang staggered and burst into lamentation. “Alas, Zi-long is gone! The country has lost a pillar and I, my right arm.”

The others also shed tears. Zhuge Liang bade the two sons go to Cheng-du to bear the sad tiding to the Second Ruler.

And the Second Ruler also wept bitterly. “Zi-long was my savior—had it not been for him I would have died an infant in the chaos of war.”

An edict was issued creating the late general Marquis of Shunping, to be buried on the east of Brocade Screen Hills in the capital. A temple was erected to his memory and sacrifices offered at four seasons.

From Changshan came a warrior, tiger-bold,
In wit and valor he was fitting mate
For Guan and Zhang, his exploits rivaling
Even theirs. Han Waters and Dangyang recall
His name. Twice in his stalwart arms he bore
The prince, his well-loved leader’s son and heir.
Histories record his brave and loyal deeds.
His glorious name stands aloft at all times.

Out of gratitude to the late general, the Second Ruler not only accorded him a most honorable burial, but showed much kindness to his sons. Both were given military ranks and ordered to guard over their father’s tomb. They thanked their lord and left.

Then an official reported to the Second Ruler that the prime minister had completed the preparation of the army and proposed to march against Wei without delay. The Second Ruler consulted the courtiers, who were mostly inclined to a cautious policy. So he could not decide. Just then it was announced that the prime minister had sent forth a memorial.

The messenger was called into the audience hall and the memorial delivered to the Second Ruler, who spread it on the imperial table and read:

"The late Emperor was anxious to restore the rule of Han and would not allow the rebel state of Wei to exist alongside the legitimate domain of ours, which would never be secure in its present limited locality. Therefore he charged me, your minister, to destroy them. Measuring my abilities by his perspicacity, he knew that I would not be strong enough to deal with the mighty enemy. However, inaction would also mean the destruction of our royal domain. It was a question of whether to sit back and await destruction or to attack? So he doubted no more and assigned me the task.

"Ever since the day I received the decree this task has occupied all my thoughts. Considering that the south should be made secure before the north could be attacked, I braved the heat of summer and crossed the Lu River, plunging deep into the wilds and eating only every two days. It was not that I cared nothing for myself, but that the royal domain should not be confined to the territory of Shu. So I will risk every danger to fulfill the late Emperor's behest. However, there are people in court who are opposed to my proposed expedition against Wei. Now the rebels have been weakened in the west and entangled in the east. The art of war advocates taking advantage of the enemy's weakness, and so now is the time to attack. I will state my argument in detail as follows.

"The wisdom of the Founder of Han rivaled the glory of the sun and moon and his counselors were profound as the ocean in knowledge and strategy. Nevertheless, he had trodden a hazardous path and suffered many losses, only attaining

repose after passing through grave dangers. Now Your Majesty is not an equal to our Founder, nor can your counselors compare with Zhang Liang and Chen Ping, yet Your Majesty is advised to seek to win the empire through a policy of prolonged confrontation with the enemy. This is the first point that puzzles me.

"In the past, Liu Yao and Wang Lang each occupied a district in the east. They passed their time in talking of peace and discussing plans, quoting the sayings of sages till all were filled with doubts and intimidated by difficulties. So year after year, no expedition was made and no battle fought, making it possible for Sun Ce to grow powerful and finally conquer all the regions east of the Yangtze. This is the second point that I cannot understand.

"In craft Cao Cao surpassed all men. He could wield armies like the great strategists of old, Sun Tzu and Wu Qi. Nevertheless, he was besieged at Nanyang, in danger at Wuchao, in peril at Qilian, hard pressed in Liyang, nearly defeated at Beishan, and almost killed at Tong Pass. Despite all these setbacks, he enjoyed a temporary period of peace. How much less can I, a man of feeble ability, bring about tranquillity without running risks? I fail to understand this third point.

"Cao Cao failed five times in his attack on Changba, and crossed the Chao Lake four times without success. He employed Li Fu, who betrayed him. He put his trust in Xiahou Yuan, who was defeated and killed. The late Emperor always regarded Cao Cao as an able man, and yet he made such mistakes. How then can I, who is much less capable,

necessarily succeed? This is the fourth point I fail to comprehend.

"Only one year has elapsed since I went into Hanzhong, yet we have lost Zhao Yun, Yang Qun, Ma Yu, Yan Zhi, Ding Li, Bai Shou, Liu He, Deng Tong, and other notable officers, more than seventy squadron leaders, and more than a thousand members of our shock brigades, trained cavalry, and Sou, Cong, and Qiang minority units. It took several decades to muster all those bold souls together from various parts of the country and not just from one district. If we delay our campaign for several more years, two-thirds of the picked troops will have died, and how then are we to destroy the enemy? This is the fifth point that troubles me.

"The people are now poor and the army exhausted indeed, but events do not cease to move. If they do not cease, then, whether we take action or remain idle, the cost is the same. But critics of my proposal say that the attack should not be made yet! With only the land of one province, we are supposed to hold out against Wei for a long period of time—this is the sixth point that I find hard to understand.

"A stable condition of things is indeed difficult to obtain. Earlier, when the late Emperor was defeated in Chu, Cao Cao clapped his hands and rejoiced that his rule was settled. Afterwards, however, the late Emperor obtained the support of Wu and Yue in the east, took Ba and Shu to the west, and undertook an expedition to the north, in which Xiahou Yuan lost his life. So Cao Cao's calculations proved erroneous, and the great design of Han seemed about to be accomplished. But later, Wu betrayed its pledge, Guan Yu was defeated, the late Emperor suffered a serious setback at Zigui, and Cao Pi

assumed the throne. Such events prove difficult to predict. I will strain my back and exert myself to the very last, but the final result, whether success or failure, whether gain or loss, is beyond my power to foresee."

The Emperor was convinced after reading the memorial, and directed Zhuge Liang to start on the expedition. Taking the order, Zhuge Liang marched out with 300,000 well-trained men, with Wei Yan leading the first division, and made all haste for the road to Chencang.

The news soon reached Luoyang, and Sima Yi informed the Emperor of Wei, who called a council to discuss the emergency. Cao Zhen stepped forth and said, "Last time I was commanded to hold Longxi, but my service was nothing compared to the loss I suffered. And the humiliation is terrible to bear. Now I beg to be given another command that I may capture Zhuge Liang. Lately I have found a stalwart warrior, a man who wields a sixty-catty sword, rides a swift battle steed, and can bend an iron bar weighing two hundred catties. When he goes into battle he also carries hidden about him three meteor maces and he never misses a target. So valorous is he that a myriad dare not stand against him. His name is Wang Shuang, a native of Longxi. I would like to recommend him to be my van leader."

Cao Rui approved at once and summoned this marvel to the hall. There came a tall man with a dusky complexion, hazel eyes, strong as a bear in the waist, and supple as a tiger in the back.

"With such a powerful warrior I have nothing to fear," said Cao Rui, smiling with pleasure.

He bestowed on the newfound hero a silken robe and golden armor and conferred on him the title of "Tiger General." And he became leader of the van of the new army.

Cao Zhen thanked the Emperor and took his leave. He collected 150,000 veterans to guard all the strategic points, together with Guo Huai and Zhang He.

The first division of the Shu army reached Chencang. Scouts were sent out to reconnoiter the area. Then they went back to report to Zhuge Liang that their enemy had built a rampart there, secure with high walls, a deep moat, and extensive barricades of abatis. A major general named Hao Zhao was in command.

"It's better to give up this place and go to Qishan by the winding paths in the Taibei Hills," they suggested.

But Zhuge Liang said, "Due north of Chencang is Jieting, and we must seize this place in order to advance."

Wei Yan was sent to surround the rampart and take city. But after several days of unsuccessful attacks, he returned and told his chief the place was impregnable. In his anger, Zhuge Liang wanted to put him to death, but at this moment an officer named Jin Xiang stood out and volunteered to go and persuade Hao Zhao to surrender.

"How are you going to persuade him?" asked Zhuge Liang. "What is your argument?"

“Hao Zhao and I are both from Longxi and we have been good friends since boyhood. I will go and lay matters before him. He will surely surrender.”

He was permitted to try and he rode quickly to the wall, where he called out, “An old friend of Hao Zhao’s has come to see him.”

Sentries on the wall went to inform Hao Zhao, who told them to let the visitor in. So Jin Xiang climbed up the wall to see his friend.

“My friend, what brings you here?” asked Hao Zhao.

“I’m a military advisor in the service of Zhuge Liang of Shu, who treats me exceedingly well. Now he’s asked me to bring you a message.”

Hao Zhao suddenly changed color and said angrily, “Zhuge Liang is our enemy. I serve Wei while you serve Shu. Each serves his own lord. We were brothers once, but now we are enemies—so say no more.”

And the visitor was requested to take his leave at once. Jin Xiang tried to broach the subject again, but his host had already left him to ascend the watch tower. The Wei soldiers hurried him on to his horse and drove him out of the gate. As he departed he looked up and saw his friend leaning on the guard rail. He pulled up his horse, pointed with his whip at Hao Zhao, and said, “My worthy brother, why are you so unfriendly?”

“Brother, you know the laws of Wei,” replied Hao Zhao. “I have received favor from my country and I will never betray it. Say no more, but go back quickly to your chief and tell him to come and attack. I’m not afraid.”

Jin Xiang had to return and report his failure. “He would not even let me speak.”

“Try again,” said Zhuge Liang. “Tell him what is at stake.”

Jin Xiang soon found himself once more at the foot of the wall. Hao Zhao presently appeared on the tower, and Jin Xiang shouted up to him, “My worthy brother, please listen to my sincere advice. Here you are in this isolated city; how can you oppose a massive army of 100,000? If you don’t yield now, you’ll be sorry when it’s too late. Instead of serving the great Han, you bow your head to the treacherous Wei. How can you fail to recognize the decree of Heaven, and distinguish between the clear and the foul? Think over this.”

Hao Zhao began to get really angry. He fitted an arrow to his bow and called out, “I have already made myself clear. Say no more but go quickly. I won’t shoot you.”

Again Jin Xiang returned and reported his failure to Zhuge Liang.

“How impudent that fool is!” cried Zhuge Liang in fury. “Does he think I have no means to take his city?”

He called in some local inhabitants to whom he asked, “How many troops are there in the city?”

They answered, “We do not know the exact number but there are about three thousand.”

“I don’t think such a small force can stop me,” said Zhuge Liang with a smile. “Let’s attack quickly before any reinforcements can arrive.”

Thereupon he ordered his men to bring up a hundred scaling ladders, upon each of which could stand more than a dozen men. These were surrounded by planks as protection. Soldiers, carrying short ladders and ropes, listened for the beating of the drum to scale the walls.

In his watch tower Hao Zhao, seeing the ladders being brought up, posted his men at the four corners and told them to shoot fire-arrows at the ladders at short ranges. Zhuge Liang had not expected this. Assuming the city was not well defended, he had prepared the scaling ladders and ordered the soldiers to press on amid loud shouting and beating of drums. He was greatly chagrined when the fire-arrows set his ladders in flames and burned many of his men to death. As arrows and stones rained down from the wall, the men of Shu were forced to retreat.

Zhuge Liang was wrathful. “So he burns my ladders—then I will use battering rams!”

So that night they prepared the rams. The next day these were placed against the walls and again the signal was given to begin the assault. But the defenders brought up great stones suspended from ropes, which they swung down at the battering rams and so broke them to pieces. Next the besiegers set to work to bring up earth to fill the moat, while

3,000 men were sent to excavate a tunnel at night to try to burrow into the city. But Hao Zhao dug a counter-trench inside the city and that device also came to naught.

So the attack went on day and night for nearly a month, and still the men of Shu could find no means to take the city. One day Zhuge Liang was in his camp pondering over this when scouts reported the approach of an enemy relief force, the flag of which bore the name of Wang Shuang. He asked for a volunteer to go out and fight the newcomer and Wei Yan offered himself.

Zhuge Liang said, "You are the van leader, a major general. You must not risk yourself so rashly."

Then a lesser officer called Xie Xiong stood forth and he was given 3,000 soldiers. After he had gone, Zhuge Liang decided to send a second force of 3,000 men, which Gong Qi volunteered to command. Then, fearing lest there would be a sortie from the city to aid the relief force, he led off the army twenty li and made a camp there.

The first body sent to combat Wang Shuang was not successful—its leader fell almost immediately under the great warrior's sword. The men fled and Wang Shuang pursued, and so ran into Gong Qi, who had come to support his comrade. He was slain in the third bout.

When he learned about this, Zhuge Liang was greatly alarmed and sent Liao Hua, Wang Ping, and Zhang Ni to go out to halt the enemy. The two sides drew up in formal battle array, and then Zhang Ni rode to the front while the other two officers guarded the lines. Wang Shuang rode to meet him, and they

fought several bouts. Then Wang Shuang feigned defeat and Zhang Ni followed. Wang Ping, who saw his colleague falling into a trap, called out to Zhang Ni to stop. Zhang Ni hastened to turn back, but Wang Shuang's meteor hammer whizzed through the air and hit him in the back. He collapsed over his saddle but still rode on to get away. Wang Shuang turned to pursue but was checked by the other two Shu officers, who rescued Zhang Ni. Then Wang Shuang's whole force came on and slew many of the men of Shu.

Zhang Ni was wounded and vomited blood. He said to Zhuge Liang, "Wang Shuang is too terrible for anyone to stand up to. He and his 20,000 men are now encamped outside the city with double fences all around and a deep moat to maintain a firm defense."

Seeing that two officers had died and a third was wounded, Zhuge Liang summoned Jiang Wei for council. "We can't proceed this way—can you suggest another plan?"

Jiang Wei replied, "This place has very strong fortifications and Hao Zhao's defense is faultless. Now there is also Wang Shuang to aid him. It is really impossible to take the city. I think it is better to send a general to establish a strong camp at some suitable site and another to hold the crucial road to prevent attack from Jieting, while the major force leaves for Qishan. I will try some ruse to capture Cao Zhen."

Zhuge Liang agreed. He sent Wang Ping and Li Hui to hold the by-road to Jieting, and Wei Yan to guard the way to Chencang. And then the army marched out of the Ye Valley by some narrow road and headed for Qishan, with Ma Dai as

van leader and Guan Xing and Zhang Bao leading the relief squadron of the front and rear forces.

Now Cao Zhen still remembered bitterly that in the last campaign Sima Yi had stolen from him the credit he had hoped to obtain. So when he reached Luoyang he transferred Guo Huai and Sun Li to positions in the east and west. Later he heard that Chencang was threatened, so he sent Wang Shuang to relieve the city. And he was overjoyed to learn about his lieutenant's success. He placed Fei Yao in command of the front division and stationed other officers at various strategic points.

One day he was told that a spy had been caught in a valley. Cao Zhen had the man brought before him and questioned. The man knelt down and said, "I am not a spy. I have a secret message for you, General, but I was caught by mistake by your men in an ambush. Pray send away your attendants."

The man's bonds were loosened and the attendants dismissed. The captive said, "I am a confidant of Jiang Wei, who has entrusted me with a secret letter."

"Where is the letter?"

The man took it from inside his underwear and presented it to Cao Zhen. It read:

I, Jiang Wei, the guilty officer, make a hundred prostrations to Commander Cao: I have never forgotten that my family has always received the bounty of Wei and I myself was employed in the defense of a frontier town. But though I have enjoyed kind favors, I have never been able to repay them.

Lately I fell victim to Zhuge Liang's wiles and so became trapped in his snare. But my longing for my old country has never ceased for a single day. Fortunately, the army of Shu has now marched westward and Zhuge Liang trusts me. I suggest that you lead an army this way in person. If you meet with resistance, just simulate defeat, and I will light a blaze in their rear as a signal. Then I will set fire to their stores, whereupon you will face about and attack. Zhuge Liang ought to fall into your hands. In doing so I am not trying to seek merit for myself but only to atone for my former crime. If this should be deemed worthy of your attention, then send me your commands without delay.

The letter pleased Cao Zhen very much. "Heaven is helping me to succeed!"

He rewarded the man handsomely and told him to return to say that he would meet Jiang Wei at a pre-arranged time. Then he took council with Fei Yao and related to him Jiang Wei's scheme.

But Fei Yao warned him. "Zhuge Liang is most crafty and Jiang Wei very resourceful. What if Zhuge Liang has planned all this? We might fall into a snare."

"But Jiang Wei is originally a man of Wei, forced to surrender. Why are you suspicious?"

"Commander, you must not venture out but remain here on guard. Let me go and reinforce Jiang Wei. If I succeed, the credit will be yours. And if there is a trick I will deal with it."

Delighted, Cao Zhen gave him 50,000 men to move toward Ye Valley.

Fei Yao and his army set out. After progressing for some time they encamped and sent out scouts to reconnoiter. Late in the afternoon scouts reported that the Shu army was coming through the valley. Fei Yao at once advanced, but the men of Shu retreated without even engaging in combat. Fei Yao pursued. Then the men of Shu came on again. Just as Fei Yao was deploying his troops for battle the Shu army retreated again. This maneuver was repeated thrice, and a whole day and night passed without any repose for the Wei army.

At length rest became imperative. But just as they were on the point of entrenching themselves to prepare food a great hubbub arose all around, and with beating of drums and blaring of trumpets the whole country was filled with the men of Shu. As the great standard was unfurled, out came a four-wheeled chariot carrying Zhuge Liang, who sent an envoy to ask the Wei commander to a parley.

Fei Yao rode out and, seeing Zhuge Liang, he secretly rejoiced. Turning to those about him, he told them to retreat if the men of Shu came on. But if they saw a blaze behind the hill they were to turn round and attack, for they would be reinforced.

Then he rode to the front and shouted, “You were beaten last time—how dare you come again?”

Zhuge Liang replied, “Go and tell Cao Zhen to come and talk with me.”

“Commander Cao is of the royal family. Do you think he will talk with a rebel?”

Zhuge Liang angrily waved his fan, and from two sides rushed forth Ma Dai and Zhang Ni and their men. The Wei army retreated. But ‘ere they had gone far they saw a blaze in the rear of the advancing host of Shu, accompanied by a great shouting. Believing that this was the signal he was looking for, Fei Yao faced about to attack. Their opponents retreated. Sword in hand, Fei Yao led the pursuit, hastening towards where the shouting came.

When he got near the signal fire, suddenly the drums beat louder than ever and the shouting shook the earth. Then out charged two troops, one under Guan Xing and the other under Zhang Bao, while arrows and stones rained down from the surrounding hills. The Wei men could not stand it and they realized that they had been tricked into a trap. Fei Yao tried to withdraw his men into the shelter of the valley, but Guan Xing led his fresh force onward, plunging the weary men of Wei into utter confusion. Trampling upon each other, many fell into the gully and were drowned.

Fei Yao could do nothing but flee for his life. Just as he was passing by a steep hill there appeared a force led by Jiang Wei. Fei Yao began to abuse him for his treachery.

Jiang Wei smiled. “I meant to capture Cao Zhen but trapped you by mistake. Yield quickly.”

But Fei Yao only tried to dash away toward a ravine. As he rode he saw towering flames rise at the entrance of the ravine, while close behind him came the pursuers. There being no

way of escape Fei Yao slew himself with his own sword. All his men surrendered. Zhuge Liang led the Shu army through Qishan, outside of which they made a camp. There, the army regrouped.

Jiang Wei received a rich reward, but he was chagrined that Cao Zhen had not been captured.

“My regret is that I did not slay Cao Zhen,” he said.

“Indeed, yes,” said Zhuge Liang. “It’s a pity that our great scheme should have been wasted on a small operation.”

Cao Zhen was very sad when he heard of the loss of Fei Yao. He consulted Guo Huai for a new plan to drive back the enemy.

Meanwhile, messengers had gone to the capital with news of Zhuge Liang’s arrival at Qishan and Cao Zhen’s defeat. Startled, Cao Rui summoned Sima Yi and asked him for advice.

“I have a scheme all prepared, not only to turn back Zhuge Liang, but to do so without any exertion on our part. They will withdraw of their own accord.”

As Cao Zhen lacked any plans to succeed
Wei could only rely on Sima’s schemes.

Sima Yi’s scheme will be disclosed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-EIGHT

Pursuing the Shu Army, Wang Shuang Is Slain

Seizing Chencang, Zhuge Liang Wins a Victory

Sima Yi said to the Emperor, “I once mentioned to Your Majesty that Zhuge Liang would invade us by way of Chencang, so I sent Hao Zhao to guard it. Now this has really happened. If Zhuge Liang invades us from that route, he could easily transport his supplies, but fortunately, with Hao Zhao and Wang Shuang on guard there, he will not dare to come that way. It is very difficult to move supplies via any other route. I give the invaders a month to exhaust their food supply. Hence their advantage lies in forcing a battle whereas ours in postponing it as long as possible. Your Majesty can order Cao Zhen to hold passes and positions tenaciously and on no account to seek open battle. In a month the enemy will have to withdraw, and that will be our opportunity to capture Zhuge Liang.”

Cao Rui, pleased to hear so succinct an argument, asked, “Since you foresaw all this so clearly, why don’t you lead an army?”

“It is not because I grudge the effort, but I have to keep the army here to guard against Lu Xun of Wu. Sun Quan will declare himself emperor before long. If he does, he will make

a preemptive attack against us because he is afraid Your Majesty will strike him, and I must be ready for when this happens."

Just then one of the courtiers announced a dispatch from Cao Zhen on military affairs, and Sima Yi added, "Your Majesty should send someone especially to caution Commander Cao not to pursue the enemy unless he is sure of their real strength, and never to penetrate deep inside a heavily-guarded area. Only thus can he avoid being tricked by Zhuge Liang."

Accordingly, the Emperor sent Han Ji bearing a jie, or symbol of authority, to take an edict to Cao Zhen warning him against giving battle. Sima Yi escorted the imperial messenger out of the city. At parting, he said: "I'm giving this opportunity to win glory to Cao Zhen, but don't tell him the suggestion is mine. Just say that it's His Majesty's idea that defense is the best and that he is not to send any impetuous man to pursue the enemy."

Cao Zhen was in his tent discussing military affairs with his subordinates when the arrival of an imperial messenger was announced. He went out to welcome him, and when the ceremony of receiving the edict was over, he retreated inside to consult Guo Huai and Sun Li.

"That's Sima Yi's idea," said Guo Huai with a laugh.

"But is the idea good?" asked Cao Zhen.

"He seems to understand perfectly Zhuge Liang's tactics in warfare. Eventually it is he who will be able to guard our country against Shu."

“But if the Shu army holds its ground?”

“We can secretly order Wang Shuang to reconnoiter along the byroads to intimidate them from bringing up supplies that way. They must retreat when they have run out of food, and we will pursue them then. Our total victory is guaranteed.”

Here Sun Li offered a ruse. “Let me go out to Qishan and pretend to be escorting a convoy of supplies, only the carts will be laden with combustibles instead of grain. We will sprinkle sulfur and niter over wood and reeds. Then we will spread the rumor that our supplies are being transported from Longxi. If the men of Shu are short of grain, they will surely try to seize the convoy and when they come we will set fire to the carts. At the same time, our hidden men will also rush out to ambush them. We will beat them.”

“An excellent plan indeed,” exclaimed Cao Zhen in joy, and he authorized Sun Li to carry out his plan. Subsequently he issued orders for Wang Shuang to patrol the byroads, Guo Huai to hold command in Qi Valley and Jieting, and other officers to hold various points of vantage. Two officers, Zhang Hu, son of Zhang Liao, and Yue Lin, son of Yue Jin, were respectively appointed leader and deputy leader of the van to guard the outermost camp and ordered not to engage in battle with the enemy.

Now at Qishan Zhuge Liang sought to bring on a battle, and daily sent out officers to provoke a combat. But the men of Wei would not come out.

Zhuge Liang called Jiang Wei and the others to him and said, “Presumably they think we are short of food so they refuse to

fight. Now our supply route through Chencang is blocked, and all the other roads are too narrow to pass. I reckon the grain we brought with us will not last a month. What is to be done?"

While thus preoccupied, there came a report that their enemy in Longxi had transported several thousand carts of grain to the west of Qishan. The convoy was commanded by Sun Li.

"What sort of man is he?" asked Zhuge Liang.

A man from Wei replied, "He is a man of courage. Once he was with the Wei ruler on a hunting expedition on Great Rock Hill, when suddenly a tiger rushed toward the Emperor. Sun Li jumped off his horse and killed the beast with his sword. He was created a general as a reward. He is one of Cao Zhen's confidants."

Zhuge Liang smiled. "This is a ruse. They know we are short of food, so they try to tempt us with those carts, which are undoubtedly laden with combustibles. How can they dream of deceiving me by this ruse of fire when I have attacked by fire all my life? They must have also planned to raid our camp if we go to seize the convoy of carts. But I will let them perish at their own game."

Turning to Ma Dai, he said: "Take 3,000 soldiers and go to the enemy's supply camp. Don't enter it, but only start a fire windward. When the grain catches fire, the soldiers of Wei will come to surround our camp."

Then he sent Ma Zhong and Zhang Ni to wait outside the camp with 5,000 men each so that the enemy would be routed from both within and without.

After the three officers departed, he called in Guan Xing and Zhang Bao, to whom he said: “The outermost camp of Wei stands at an intersection of roads. Tonight, when the enemy sees a blaze among the western hills, they will come to attack our camp, so you two are to lie in wait on the two sides of their camp and seize it when they have left.”

Next he summoned Wu Ban and Wu Yi. “You’re to take one thousand men each and lie in wait outside the camp. When they come to raid us, you’re to cut off their way of retreat.”

Having made these arrangements, Zhuge Liang took a seat high in the mountains to watch the results.

Scouts of Wei learned that their enemies were coming to seize the grain convoy and ran to tell Sun Li, who sent on the news to Cao Zhen. The commander immediately alerted his two van leaders of this and ordered them to move out their men when they saw a blaze in the western hills, as that would mean that the men of Shu had arrived. Following this instruction the two posted sentinels in the watchtower to look out for the expected blaze.

Meanwhile, Sun Li had hidden his men in the western hills to await the coming of the men of Shu. That night, at the second watch, Ma Dai came very quietly with his 3,000 soldiers, the men muted with gags, the horses with a lashing round their muzzles. They saw tier after tier of carts on the hills, making

an enclosure like a walled camp, and on the carts were planted some flags for show.

They waited. Presently a southwesterly wind blew up, and the fire was started. Soon all the carts were in a blaze that lit up the sky. Seeing the fire, Sun Li concluded that the men of Shu had arrived and that this was the signal to attack, so he dashed forward. But soon two parties of soldiers were heard behind him, closing in. These were Ma Zhong and Zhang Ni, who soon had Sun Li cornered. Then he heard more ominous shouting, which heralded the approach of Ma Dai from the direction of the blaze.

Under these attacks the men of Wei quailed and gave way. As the wind blew stronger the fire grew fiercer. Men ran and horses stampeded, and the dead were too many to count. Sun Li, leading the wounded, made a dash through the smoke and fire of the battle and got away.

When the two van leaders of Wei saw the fire, they threw open the gates of their camp and sallied forth to seize the Shu camp. But when they reached there they found the place empty. So they hastened to return. At that moment Wu Ban and Wu Yi appeared and blocked their way of retreat. After a desperate fight they succeeded in breaking through. But when, at length, they returned to their own camp they were met by arrows flying thick as locusts—for Guan Xing and Zhang Bao had taken possession in their absence.

They could only set out for headquarters to report their mishap. As they neared Cao Zhen's camp they met another party of beaten men. These were Sun Li and his men, and the three officers went into camp together and told their chief

how they had been tricked. Cao Zhen thereafter reinforced his camp and did not venture out to give battle.

The victorious men of Shu went back to see Zhuge Liang, who at once dispatched secret directions to Wei Yan. Then he gave orders to break camp and retreat. Surprised at this move, Yang Yi asked him why he wanted to withdraw after a victory so damaging to the enemy.

"Because we're short of food," explained Zhuge Liang, "and our success lies in a swift victory. But the enemy will not fight, and thus they weaken us day by day. Though we have worsted them now they will soon be reinforced. If they send their light cavalry to raid our provision routes, we won't be able to retreat, even if we want to. Now that they have been recently smitten and dare not confront us, we must take this occasion to do what they do not expect, and withdraw. My only concern is Wei Yan, who is on the Chencang road holding off Wang Shuang, and cannot get away so easily. But I have sent him a secret order to slay Wang Shuang, and then the men of Wei won't dare to pursue."

So the rear force retreated first, but to deceive the enemy the watchmen were left in the empty camp to beat the gongs through the night. The whole army withdrew during the night.

Cao Zhen was depressed at his recent misfortune. Suddenly he was told that Zhang He had arrived with troops. Presently he entered the tent and said to Cao Zhen, "His Majesty has sent me here to receive your commands."

"Did you take leave of Sima Yi?" asked Cao Zhen.

“Yes,” replied Zhang He. “His instruction to me was: ‘If we win, the men of Shu will not leave—but if we lose they will withdraw at once.’ Now our side has missed the chance for success. Have you been to find out what the men of Shu are doing?”

“Not yet.”

Then he immediately sent out some scouts, who confirmed Sima Yi’s prediction. There were flags flying in the Shu camp, but the men had been gone two days. Cao Zhen regretted very much but it was too late for him to do anything.

In Chencang Wei Yan had received his chief’s secret order, and he also broke camp that night and hastened toward Hanzhong. Spies at once informed Wang Shuang, who hurried in pursuit. After about twenty li he came in sight of Wei Yan’s ensign.

As soon as he got within hailing distance he shouted, “Do not flee, Wei Yan.”

But no one looked back, so he again pressed forward. Then he heard his men behind him shouting, “There is a blaze in the camp outside the wall. The enemy may have set a trap for us.”

Wang Shuang pulled up and, turning, saw the towering flames. He hastily drew off his men. Just as he passed a hill, a horseman suddenly flew out of a wood.

“Here is Wei Yan,” shouted the horseman.

Wang Shuang was too startled to defend himself and fell at the first stroke of Wei Yan's sword. His men thought this was only the beginning of an ambush, so they scattered—but in fact Wei Yan only had thirty men with him, and they moved off at leisure toward Hanzhong.

No man could better Zhuge Liang's foresight;
Brilliant as a comet where it flashed:
Advance or retreat he maneuvers at will.
On Chencang road he ordered Wang killed.

Now let us reveal Zhuge Liang's secret order to Wei Yan: "Keep back thirty men and hide beside Wang Shuang's camp. When he leaves to pursue your men, light a fire in his camp. When he returns, fall upon him suddenly and kill him." The plan being successfully carried out, Wei Yan followed the retreating army into Hanzhong and handed over his men. Then feasts were given to reward the army.

In the Wei camp Zhang He, who failed to come up with the retreating enemy, presently returned.

Suddenly Hao Zhao sent a man to say that Wang Shuang had met his end. This loss grieved Cao Zhen so deeply that he fell ill and had to return to Luoyang. He left Zhang He, Sun Li, and Guo Huai to guard the various roads to Chang'an.

At a court held by Sun Quan, Prince of Wu, he was informed of Zhuge Liang's two expeditions and Cao Zhen's loss of officers and men. Thereupon all his officials urged him to attack Wei to try to gain the northern territory. Sun Quan listened but could not make up his mind.

Zhang Zhao said, “I have heard that a phoenix has lately appeared in the hills east of Wuchang and a yellow dragon has been seen repeatedly in the Yangtze. My lord, your virtue matches that of the ancient emperors Yao and Shun, and your sagacity equals that of kings Wen and Wu. Therefore you should first assume the supreme title of Emperor and then raise an army.”

Many other officials supported Zhang Zhao’s proposal and they finally persuaded Sun Quan to decide upon a date to accede to the throne. They prepared an altar to the south of Wuchang, and on that day his courtiers formally requested him to ascend the altar and assume the position of emperor.

Yellow Dragon was chosen as the reign title. Sun Jian, the deceased father of the new emperor, was posthumously given the title of Emperor Wu Lie; his mother was made Empress Wu Lie; and his elder brother, Sun Ce, Prince Huan of Changsha. His son, Sun Deng, was made Heir Apparent. A high rank, Companion of the Heir Apparent, was conferred upon the eldest son of Zhuge Jin and the second son of Zhang Zhao.

This son of Zhuge Jin was named Zhuge Ke, a person of medium height, and very clever. He was especially apt at repartee. Sun Quan liked him very much. When he was six he went with his father to a banquet. Sun Quan noticed that Zhuge Jin had a long face, so he told a man to lead in a donkey, and he wrote Zhuge Jin’s name on it with chalk. Everyone roared. But the boy went up and added two characters, making it read, “Zhuge Jin’s donkey.” The guests were astonished at his quick wit. Greatly pleased, Sun Quan gave him the donkey as a present.

Another time, at a large official banquet, Sun Quan sent the boy to pour wine to all present. When he came to Zhang Zhao, the old man declined it. “This is not showing proper courtesy to an old man.”

“Can you make him drink?” asked Sun Quan.

Zhuge Ke took the order and went to the old gentleman again. “You remember Minister Lu Shang of old? He was ninety and yet he gripped the signaling flag and wielded the battle-ax of an army commander in the field. He never said he was old. Nowadays in battle we put you, sir, in the rear, but at the banquet we give you, sir, a front place. How can you say we do not pay proper courtesy to old age?”

Zhang Zhao could not reply, and so had to drink. This sort of precocity endeared the boy to Sun Quan, and now he made him companion of his son.

Zhang Zhao’s son was chosen for honor on account of the eminent services of his father.

Gu Yong became prime minister. Lu Xun was made a high-ranking general, to assist the Heir Apparent in the custody of Wuchang.

Sun Quan returned to Jianye, where the whole court turned their thoughts toward the suppression of Wei. Only Zhang Zhao opposed it and advised his lord to attend to internal reform.

“It is not appropriate to begin Your Majesty’s new reign with a war. I deem it better to put aside weapons and promote

learning by establishing schools to give the people the blessings of peace. Send an envoy to Shu and propose a renewal of our former league and promise to share the empire with them. Then plan carefully how to conquer the north."

Sun Quan saw the wisdom of the advice and approved. He at once sent an envoy to Shu to lay the scheme of an alliance before the Second Ruler, who discussed it with his ministers. All denounced Sun Quan as a usurper and advised their lord to reject the proposal for an alliance. Then Jiang Wan suggested seeking the prime minister's advice.

So the Second Ruler dispatched a messenger to Hanzhong to put the matter before Zhuge Liang.

The prime minister responded: "Send an envoy with presents to Wu to congratulate Sun Quan and ask him to commission Lu Xun to lead an army against Wei. Then Sima Yi will be engaged in the east, and I may once more move out of Qishan to capture Chang'an."

The Second Ruler took the advice and sent Chen Zhen to Wu, taking with him presents of fine horses, a jeweled belt, gold, and pearls to congratulate Sun Quan on his newly assumed dignity. Delighted, Sun Quan accepted the presents and entertained the bearer before sending him off.

After the envoy was gone Sun Quan called in Lu Xun and told him about Shu's request to launch a joint war against Wei. Lu Xun saw through the scheme at once.

"That is Zhuge Liang's scheme because of his fear of Sima Yi," he said. "However, we have to since we have just formed

a league with them. We will make a show of raising an army to respond to their call. When Zhuge Liang is fully entangled in his war with Wei, we will seize the northern plains for ourselves."

Orders were issued to commanders in Jingzhou and other regions, requiring them to train soldiers for an expedition.

In the meantime, Chen Zhen returned to Hanzhong and reported to Zhuge Liang about his mission in Wu. Still wary that the road at Chencang would not be easy to take, Zhuge Liang sent scouts to reconnoiter. These returned with the news that Hao Zhao, Wei commander at Chencang, was very ill.

"That means success for me," cried Zhuge Liang.

He called in Wei Yan and Jiang Wei, to whom he said, "Take 5,000 men and hasten to Chencang. Attack in full force when you see a blaze."

The two did not quite believe their chief was serious, and went to ask him the exact date of departure.

"In three days you should be ready to march. You don't have to come and take leave of me, but set out as soon as possible."

After they had left his tent he summoned Guan Xing and Zhang Bao and whispered some secret instructions in their ears. And the two left to carry out his plan.

Now when Guo Huai heard that the commander of Chencang was ill, he said to Zhang He, "Hao Zhao is very ill—you had

better go and relieve him at once. I will report to the court in the meantime."

So Zhang He started out with his 3,000 men to relieve the sick man.

At Chencang Hao Zhao was indeed on his deathbed, and that night, when his life hung in the balance, suddenly there came the news that the men of Shu had reached the walls. Hao Zhao hastened to order his men to defend the rampart. But then fire broke out at each gate and a panic spread in the city. The startling news frightened the sick man so much that he passed away just as the men of Shu stormed into the city.

When Wei Yan and Jiang Wei reached Chencang they found no sign of life: no flags flying and no watchmen beating the gong to mark the hours. Perplexed, they dared not attack. Then they heard an explosion and suddenly the wall was thick with flags, and there appeared the well-known figure of their prime minister.

"You're late," he cried.

In haste both dismounted and knelt down. "Your strategy is really marvelous, sir!"

They were allowed to enter the city.

Zhuge Liang then explained to them: "When I heard of Hao Zhao's serious illness, I told you to take the city in three days. That was to conceal my real plan. Then I ordered Guan and Zhang to muster their men—pretending to be just holding a roll call—and secretly move out of Hanzhong. I hid myself in

their ranks. Then the army advanced by double march to the city wall so that the enemy would be unable to summon reinforcements. Besides, I had already planted spies inside the city to start a fire and stir up a hubbub to scare the men of Wei, who would be thrown into confusion without their commander. And seizing the city was like turning over my hand. As the Art of War says, 'Do what your enemy does not expect you to do; attack when your enemy is unprepared.'"

They bowed again in admiration. In commiseration Zhuge Liang allowed Hao Zhao's family to take his coffin back to Wei, thus to show his loyalty to his country.

Turning once more to the two generals, he said, "Don't take off your armor yet. Go and launch a surprise attack on San Pass. The troops there will certainly flee in panic at your approach. If you delay, Wei will have sent reinforcements."

They went. Surely enough the defenders of the pass all fled and the capture was as smooth as Zhuge Liang had predicted. But before they could strip off their armor they saw in the distance a great cloud of dust moving toward them—the Wei reinforcements were already near.

They marveled at the keen foresight of the prime minister. Then they hurried up the watch tower to look and saw the approaching Wei general was Zhang He.

They then divided their men to hold crucial roads. When Zhang He saw this, he ordered retreat. Wei Yan followed, slaying numerous Wei soldiers. Zhang He left in defeat. Wei Yan returned to the pass and sent news of their success to Zhuge Liang, who then led a force out of Chencang and Ye

Valley to capture Jianwei. The rest of the Shu army progressed steadily. Moreover, the Emperor sent another general, Chen Shi by name, to assist in the campaign. Soon Zhuge Liang's main force had again moved out of Qishan and there made a camp.

Then he addressed a general assembly: "Twice have I led the army out by Qishan without success, and now I am here again. I'm sure the men of Wei will resume the battle positions of earlier times. They will assume that I'm going to attack Yong and Mei and will send armies to defend these cities. But I see Yinping and Wudu are connected with the land of our country, and if I can win these cities I can drive a wedge into the Wei force. Who will go and capture these places?"

Jiang Wei and Wang Ping offered themselves. So the former was given 10,000 men to capture Wudu; the latter, with an equal force, went to Yin-ping.

Zhang He went back to Chang'an and said to his colleagues, "Chencang is lost and Hao Zhao is dead. San Pass is also taken. Zhuge Liang is again at Qishan and his army is advancing by different routes."

Guo Huai was frightened. "In that case, Yong and Mei are in danger."

Leaving Zhang He to guard Chang'an, he sent Sun Li to Yongcheng, while he himself set out at once for Meicheng. At the same time he dispatched an urgent message to Luoyang.

At the Wei court, the Emperor was informed of his army's losses and defeats in the west. He had hardly recovered from the shock when suddenly a report arrived stating Sun Quan's enthronement, his alliance with Shu, and Lu Xun's preparations for an imminent invasion of Wei. Hearing that both the west and the south were in critical situations, Cao Rui was frightened and did not know what to do. Cao Zhen, being ill, could not be consulted, and so Sima Yi was called.

"In my humble opinion, Wu will not attack us," said Sima Yi readily.

"What makes you think so?" asked the Emperor.

"Because Zhuge Liang has always cherished a desire to avenge the loss at Xiaoting. Not that he does not wish to absorb Wu, but he fears that we may swoop down upon him. That is why he enters into this temporary alliance with Wu. Lu Xun also knows it full well, and he is only making a show of raising an army to respond to Zhuge Liang's call to arms. Actually, he is sitting on the fence. Hence Your Majesty may disregard the menace from the south and only protect yourself against Shu."

"Your insight is really remarkable!" said the Emperor, who created Sima Yi commander-in-chief of all the forces in the west. A courtier was directed to go to Cao Zhen for the seal.

"I would rather go myself," said Sima Yi. So he took leave of the Emperor and went to Cao Zhen's residence. When he had inquired after the sick general's health, he said, "Shu and Wu have formed an alliance against us, and Zhuge Liang is

encamped at Qishan again. Have you heard about these developments, General?"

Startled, Cao Zhen replied, "My people have kept back all news, knowing how ill I am. In that case the country is in danger. Why have they not made you commander-in-chief to stop this invasion?"

"I am not equal to the post," said Sima Yi.

"Bring the seal and give it to him," said Cao Zhen to his attendants.

"Do not worry, General. I would like to lend you a hand, but I dare not accept the seal."

Leaping out of bed, Cao Zhen said, "If you do not take it, the country is surely at risk. Ill as I am, I must go and see the Emperor to recommend you."

"The Emperor has already kindly issued his appointment, but I dare not accept his offer."

"As commander you will drive off the Shu army," said Cao Zhen in great joy.

Seeing Cao Zhen repeatedly offering him the seal, Sima Yi eventually accepted it. Then he took leave of the Emperor and led the army to Chang'an to fight a decisive battle with Zhuge Liang.

The seal of office changes hands,
Two armies now one force become.

The result of the battle will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE

Zhuge Liang Wins a Great Victory

Sima Yi Drives His Army into Shu

It was summer, the fourth month of the seventh year of Jian Xing in Shu. Zhuge Liang was at Qishan divided into three camps, waiting for the army of Wei.

In the meantime Sima Yi had reached Chang'an, where he was welcomed by Zhang He, who told him all that had happened. Sima Yi appointed Zhang He his leader of the van, with Dai Ling as his second, and then marched out to Qishan, camping on the south bank of the Wei River. Guo Huai and Sun Li went to see their new commander.

"Have you fought a large-scale battle with the enemy?" asked Sima Yi.

"Not yet."

Sima Yi said, "The enemy has endured a long march and their chance lies in a quick victory. Their inaction can only mean they have some scheme laid out. Have you heard anything from the west?"

Guo Huai replied, “Scouts have sent in reports that commanders have guarded their positions very carefully day and night and all is calm. But there is no news from Wudu and Yinping.”

“I will send someone to challenge Zhuge Liang to a battle. You two go and take some byroads behind the enemy forces to rescue these two towns. Then attack the rear of the Shu army so as to throw them into disorder.”

Guo Huai and Sun Li set out with 5,000 men to carry out this order, and on the way they fell to discussing Sima Yi.

“How does Sima Yi compare with Zhuge Liang?” asked Guo Huai.

“Zhuge Liang is far more clever,” replied Sun Li.

“He may be cleverer, yet this scheme of our commander’s shows him to be superior to most men. If the men of Shu are attacking those two places, and we unexpectedly fall upon their rear, how can they not be in chaos?”

But even as they spoke a scout rode forth to say that the two cities were now in the enemy’s possession and furthermore, that the Shu army was not far ahead.

Sun Li said, “Why do they post their army out in the open when they have already taken those two cities? There must be some ruse afoot. We’d better retreat.”

His companion agreed, and they issued orders to face about and retreat. Just then a bomb exploded, and, all at once, there

suddenly appeared from the cover of some hills a body of men. On the flag that came forward they read the name "Zhuge Liang," and in the midst of the company they saw him, seated in a small chariot. On his left was Guan Xing, and on his right, Zhang Bao.

They were startled. Zhuge Liang laughed and said, "Don't try to run away. Did you think Sima Yi's ruse would deceive me? He sent someone to challenge me to fight every day, indeed, while you were to slip behind my army and attack! Now I have captured the two cities. Why don't you surrender quickly? Do you attempt to fight a battle with me?"

His words struck real terror into them. Then behind them loud shouts of battle arose, and Wang Ping and Jiang Wei began to smite them in the rear, while Guan Xing and Zhang Bao bore down upon them in front. Soon they were utterly broken. Abandoning their horses, they tried to escape by scrambling up the hillside. Seeing this, Zhang Bao urged his steed forward to catch them, but unfortunately he and his horse fell crashing into a gully. When his men picked him up they found his head badly hurt. Zhuge Liang sent him back to Chengdu to nurse his wound.

Guo Huai and Sun Li escaped and went back to see Sima Yi. "Wudu and Yinping are both in the enemy's possession. Zhuge Liang had prepared an ambush, and attacked us both from the front and rear. So we lost the day and only escaped on foot."

"It's no fault of yours," said the commander. "Zhuge Liang is cleverer than me. Now take some troops to defend Yong and

Mei. But remember, never go out to give battle. I have a plan to defeat them."

These two having left, Sima Yi called in Zhang He and Dai Ling. "Zhuge Liang has captured Wudu and Yinping. He must be pacifying the people of these places, and so will be absent from his camp. Tonight I want you to each take 10,000 men and make your way quietly to the rear of the Shu army. Then attack vigorously. Meanwhile, I will deploy the army in front of their camp. When they show signs of disorder I will attack them in full force. With the combined strength of our two armies their camp will be seized. If I have the advantage of these hills their defeat will be easy."

So the two commanders left along separate routes, Zhang He on the right and his colleague on the left. They took byroads and got well to the rear of the Shu army. At midnight they struck the high road and joined forces. Then they charged forth, intending to smite the enemy in the rear. After marching about thirty li their men in front suddenly halted. The two officers galloped up to see what had caused them to stop and found several hundred carts of hay drawn across the road.

"This means our enemy is prepared," said Zhang He. "We should withdraw."

But they had hardly ordered the men to retreat than flames danced all over the hill, and amid rolling drums and blaring trumpets, the Shu soldiers sprang out and surrounded them on every side. At the same time Zhuge Liang shouted from the hilltop, "Listen, Dai Ling and Zhang He! Sima Yi reckoned that I would be busy restoring order in the two towns and so

would not be in my camp. Therefore he sent you to assault my camp, but you have fallen into my snare. As you are officers of no great importance I will not harm you. Dismount and yield."

Zhang He's wrath blazed forth at this, and he pointed at Zhuge Liang, crying, "You rustic of the woods, invader of our great country! How dare you utter such words to me? Wait till I catch you—I will tear you to shreds."

He galloped forward to ascend the hill, his spear ready to thrust. But from the hill arrows and stones pelted down, forcing him back. Then, urging his steed and raising his spear, he dashed in among the Shu soldiers, who receded as he came on. He got clear of the encirclement, but when he saw his colleague was not with him he at once turned back, fought his way to his comrade, and brought him out safely.

From the hilltop Zhuge Liang watched him thrust about fearlessly, and his valor seemed to redouble as he fought. The huge crowd of soldiers did not seem to exist for him at all.

"I have heard that men stood aghast when Zhang Fei fought his terrible battle with Zhang He. Now I have seen it for myself and know his valor. He will do harm to Shu one day if I spare him. He will have to be removed."

Then he returned to his camp. By this time Sima Yi had completed his battle line and was anxiously waiting for the moment of confusion in the Shu army to attack. Suddenly he saw his two officers come back in a sorry state. They told him how Zhuge Liang had anticipated them and so they were completely defeated.

“He is really more than human!” exclaimed Sima Yi. “We’d better retreat.”

So the whole army retreated into the fortified camps and would not come out.

Thus Zhuge Liang scored a great victory, obtaining large spoils of equipment, weapons, and horses. The army then went back to camp.

Thereafter he sent Wei Yan out to challenge every day, but the Wei army remained obstinately behind their shelter. This continued for half a month. That day Zhuge Liang was brooding over this in his tent when he was told that the Second Ruler had sent Fei Yi with an edict from the capital. Zhuge Liang received the imperial document with all respect, and incense was burnt as propriety demanded. Then the edict was opened and read out to Zhuge Liang:

> The failure at Jieting was really due to the fault of Ma Su. However, you held yourself responsible and blamed yourself very severely. As I was unwilling to defy your wish, I complied. However, that was a glorious exploit of yours last year when Wang Shuang was slain. And this year you have sent Guo Huai fleeing, subdued the Di and Qiang tribesmen, and recovered two cities. You have struck fear into the hearts of all our enemies and thus rendered magnificent services.
>
> The land is still in chaos, and our arch enemy has not been destroyed. You shoulder a great responsibility in the administration of my state. Yet

> too long have you remained in self-mortification, which is not the way to glorify our cause. Therefore I restore you to the rank of prime minister. Pray do not decline the honor.

Zhuge Liang heard the edict to the end and then said, “My task is not yet accomplished—how can I return to the office of prime minister?” And he resolutely refused to accept the post.

Fei Yi said, “If you decline this you flout the desire of the Emperor and also hurt the feelings of the army. Better to accept it for the moment.”

Only then did Zhuge Liang agree to accept the honor. Fei Yi went away.

Seeing that Sima Yi persevered in maintaining the defensive, Zhuge Liang thought of a plan. He gave orders to break camp and retreat.

When scouts told Sima Yi about this, he said, “We mustn’t stir. There is bound to be some subtle scheme in this move.”

Zhang He argued, “It must mean that their food supply is exhausted. How can we not pursue?”

“I reckon Zhuge Liang laid up ample supplies last year. Now the wheat is ripe, and he has plenty of grain and forage. Transport may be difficult, but he can hold out for six months. Why should he run away? He sees that we resolutely refuse battle, and he is trying some ruse to inveigle us into

fighting. We can send spies ahead to find out what he is up to."

Soon spies returned to say that Zhuge Liang had encamped thirty li away.

"I knew he would not withdraw," said Sima Yi. "We must remain on the defensive still more strictly and not advance."

Ten days passed without further news, nor did the men of Shu come to challenge. Again spies were sent far afield, and they reported that the men of Shu had broken camp and left. Incredulous, Sima Yi changed his clothes and went to see it for himself, hiding among the soldiers. Truly enough, he found that the Shu army had retreated another thirty li.

"That is Zhuge Liang's scheme," said Sima Yi to Zhang He when he returned. "Don't pursue."

Another ten days passed and again spies were sent out. They came back to say that the enemy had gone yet another thirty li ahead and encamped.

Zhang He said, "Commander, why are you so suspicious? I can see that Zhuge Liang is retreating into Hanzhong, only he is doing it step-by-step. Why not pursue him before it is too late? Let me attack him!"

"But Zhuge Liang's vile tricks are innumerable," cautioned Sima Yi. "A defeat would destroy the morale of our men, and it's better not to risk it."

“If I go and am beaten I will stand the full rigor of military punishment,” declared Zhang He.

“Well, if you’re set on going, let us divide the army. You take a troop and go first, but you must urge your men to fight their very hardest. I will follow to help in case of ambush. Depart tomorrow and pitch camp halfway. Then engage the enemy the day after. Thus the army won’t suffer from exhaustion.”

So the next day Zhang He, in highly militant spirits, started out first, taking with him Dai Ling and 30,000 veteran soldiers led by dozens of lesser officers. Halfway they camped. Sima Yi, leaving a substantial guard in the camp, set out along the same road with 5,000 men.

Now these movements of the army of Wei were not lost on Zhuge Liang, who had sent spies to reconnoiter. Knowing that Zhang He’s army had camped to rest, he summoned his officers that night and said to them: “The enemies are coming in pursuit and will fight desperately. To oppose them each of you will have to fight with the strength of ten, and I will set an ambush to block their rear. Only a wise and bold warrior is fit for this task.”

As he closed this speech he fixed his gaze at Wei Yan, who, however, hung his head without response.

Then Wang Ping stepped forth and volunteered. “I will go.”

“But if you fail, what then?” asked Zhuge Liang.

“I will answer by the military law.”

Zhuge Liang sighed. “Wang Ping is really most loyal! He is willing to risk arrows and stones in his country’s service. However, our enemies are coming in two divisions, one coming in front, the other trying to get round to the rear of our men in ambush. Wang Ping is clever and bold enough, but he can’t be in two places at once, so I must have yet another officer. But alas! Is there no one else in the army who is willing to risk death?”

Before he finished his words, Zhang Yi stepped to the front and offered himself.

“Zhang He is a most famous general in Wei and valorous beyond all compare. You’re not a match for him.”

“If I fail I will have my head laid before you,” said Zhang Yi.

“Since you dare to go, you and Wang Ping can take 10,000 veterans each and hide in a valley. When the enemy comes, let them pass through and then fall upon their rear. If Sima Yi comes you must divide the men, with Zhang Yi to hold those from behind and Wang Ping to check those in front. Both of you must be ready to fight to the death—I have further plans to aid you.”

When they had gone, he called forward Jiang Wei and Liao Hua, to whom he said, “Take this silk bag and 3,000 picked soldiers. Then proceed quietly to the mountains in front. When you see your two colleagues in great straits, don’t go to their rescue but open the bag and you will find a plan to relieve their danger.”

After they had left, he whispered to four other officers (Ma Zhong, Zhang Ni, Wu Yi, and Wu Ban): “When the men of Wei come tomorrow they will be of very high morale, so you’re not to involve them in direct fighting, but only raid them at intervals. Wait till you see Guan Xing come up, then turn round and fight your best. I will arrange for someone to reinforce you.”

Finally he called Guan Xing and said to him, “Lead 5,000 men and hide in a valley. When you see a red flag waving at a hilltop, fall on the enemy.”

Following the instruction Guan Xing also departed to carry out his part of the plan.

Meanwhile, Zhang He and Dai Ling hurried along as swiftly as a squall till they were suddenly confronted by the four officers of Shu. Zhang He angrily dashed forward to engage them, who retreated, stopping at intervals to fight. The Wei army pursued for about twenty li.

It was the sixth month of the year and the weather was sultry hot. Men and horses sweated profusely. When they had chased thirty li farther, the men of Wei were all panting for breath. At that moment Zhuge Liang, who had watched the fighting from a hill, waved a red flag to give Guan Xing the signal to rush forth from his hiding place and join in the battle. The other four leaders also led on their men. Zhang He and Dai Ling fought ferociously to try to ward off their opponents.

Suddenly, amid thunderous shouting, Wang Ping and Zhang Yi galloped out, forging ahead heroically to cut off the

enemy's way of retreat. The men of Wei struggled with all their might but were unable to extricate themselves.

Zhang He shouted to his fellow officers, "The moment has come for us to fight it out with our enemy!"

Encouraged by his call, the men of Wei mustered all their strength to try to break through, but their attempts were in vain. Suddenly there was heard a deafening roll of drums, and Sima Yi arrived from the rear. He at once directed his officers to surround Wang Ping and Zhang Yi.

"How far-sighted the prime minister is!" marveled Zhang Yi. "The battle goes just as he foretold. He will surely have a good plan. Let's fight the enemy to the finish!"

Thereupon the men were divided into two parts. Wang Ping led half the men to hold up Zhang He and Dai Ling, while Zhang Yi took the other half to oppose Sima Yi. On both sides a fierce struggle ensued and the sky shook with loud battle cries.

From their position on a hill, Jiang Wei and Liao Hua watched the battle. They saw that the Wei force was very strong and their own side was in danger and gradually giving way.

"Now surely is the moment to open the bag," said Jiang Wei.

So the bag was opened, and this is what they read: "If Sima Yi comes and Wang Ping and Zhang Yi seem hard pressed, break your force in two and go directly to attack Sima Yi's camp, which will cause him to hasten retreat, and then you're

to fall upon him. You will be able to win the day, even though the camp won't be captured."

Overjoyed, they divided the force and started for the enemy's camp along two routes. Now Sima Yi had really feared that he would fall victim to some ruse of Zhuge Liang's, so he had arranged for news to be sent to him constantly along the road. He was urging his men to fight when a messenger galloped up to say that two forces of Shu were making for his camp.

Turning pale with fright at the news, Sima Yi said to his officers, "I knew Zhuge Liang was up to some trick, but you wouldn't believe me. I have no alternative but to withdraw now our camp is at stake."

Thereupon he collected his men and hastened to retreat. The men went hurriedly and fell to disorder. Zhang Yi came up behind, and routed them. Zhang He and Dai Ling, weakened now in strength, sought refuge among some byroads in the hills. So the men of Shu scored a major victory. They were further aided by Guan Xing from the rear.

Sima Yi hurried back to camp, having suffered heavy losses. But the men of Shu had already withdrawn. Gathering together his beaten army he rebuked his officers for causing the failure.

"How little you know of the art of war!" he cried. "You rely only on your blood-thirst valor. Now this is the result of your unbridled desire to go out and give battle. For the future I forbid you to act so impulsively. Whoever dares to disobey will definitely be punished by military law."

Ashamed of their conduct, they quietly withdrew. In this fight the losses of Wei were very heavy—a great many soldiers were killed, and countless horses and weapons abandoned.

Zhuge Liang led his victorious army to camp and planned to advance still farther. Suddenly a messenger arrived from the capital with the sad news that Zhang Bao had died. Astounded, Zhuge Liang cried bitterly, tears streaming down his cheeks and blood gushing from his mouth, and he fell to the ground unconscious. The others helped him up and brought him back to consciousness. But he fell ill and had to keep to his bed. His officers were much moved by his deep sorrow for his men.

A poet lamented over this episode:

Fierce and valiant was Zhang Bao,
Striving hard to make a name;
Sad the gods should interfere
And withhold a hero's fame!
Kongming wept his untimely end,
For he knew a warrior gone,
And he needed every helper;
His own strength was nearly done.

Zhuge Liang's illness worsened. Ten days later he summoned several officers to his tent and said, "I feel too ill to lead the army. I think it's better for me to return to Hanzhong for treatment. You must strictly keep this secret, or Sima Yi will certainly attack us."

He issued an order to break camp that night, and the army retreated into Hanzhong forthwith. Sima Yi only heard of this

five days later, whereupon he sighed deeply, “Zhuge Liang’s schemes are really as unfathomable as those of gods or spirits—he is too much for me.”

Then leaving the officers to guard the camp and various commanding positions, Sima Yi also marched homeward.

After the Shu army was settled in Hanzhong, Zhuge Liang went to the capital for treatment. Officials of all ranks came to greet him and escort him to his residence. The Second Ruler also came to inquire after his health and sent his own physicians to attend to the prime minister. So gradually he recovered.

It was autumn, the seventh month of the eighth year of Jian Xing in Shu. Cao Zhen, the commander of all forces in Wei, had recovered from his illness and he submitted a memorial to his ruler, which read:

“Shu has repeatedly invaded our borders and poses a grave threat to our country. If it is not destroyed, it will ultimately be our ruin. The autumn coolness is now here. The army is in good form, and it is the most favorable time for an attack on Shu. I propose to lead an army with Sima Yi and march into Hanzhong to exterminate this vile horde and free our borders from trouble.”

Pleased, the Emperor consulted Liu Ye on the feasibility of Cao Zhen’s proposal.

Liu Ye replied, “Commander Cao is right. If Shu is not destroyed now it will remain a great menace. Your Majesty should adopt his proposal.”

When he returned home, a crowd of officials flocked to inquire. “We’re told the Emperor has consulted you about an expedition against Shu. Do you think it’s feasible?”

“No,” said Liu Ye. “Shu is too difficult a country to invade—it would be a mere waste of men and arms, and of no benefit to the state.”

They could say nothing and left silently. Then one of them went to see the Emperor and said, “It is said that yesterday Liu Ye advised Your Majesty to wage war against Shu; but today he told us that Shu could not be attacked. He is deceiving Your Majesty. Why not summon him and question him?”

So the Emperor called in Liu Ye and asked him to explain.

He replied, “I have given the matter careful considerations and I think Shu cannot be attacked.”

The Emperor laughed. After a while Yang Ji left, and then Liu Ye said, “Yesterday I advised Your Majesty to attack Shu, which is an important policy of the state and should be divulged to nobody. The essence of a military move is deception. And there should be no leakage before the enactment of an operation.”

Then the Emperor understood, and thereafter Liu Ye was held in greater esteem. Ten days later Sima Yi came to court, and was shown Cao Zhen’s memorial.

Sima Yi replied, “The moment is opportune—I do not think there is any danger from Wu.”

Cao Zhen was created commander-in-chief of the western expedition, Sima Yi, second-in-command, and Liu Ye, chief counselor of the army. These three then took leave of the Emperor, and the army of 400,000 marched to Chang'an, from where they could hasten to Sword Pass and attack Hanzhong. Guo Huai and Sun Li also joined the expedition.

Reports of these developments were sent to the Shu capital. Zhuge Liang, then quite recovered, had been engaged in training his army on the special military formation known as "Eight-Gate Arrays." All had learned the skill and were ready to attack the north.

When he heard of Wei's invasion, he called in Zhang Ni and Wang Ping and said, "Take one thousand men to garrison the old road to Chencang to check the Wei army. I will come with reinforcements later."

The two replied, "It is said the Wei army numbers 400,000, and they declare they have double that number. How can a thousand men hold back such a large force?"

Zhuge Liang replied, "I would like to give you more, but I fear it would be too hard for the soldiers."

The two officers stood staring at each other, not daring to undertake the task.

"If you fail I will not hold you responsible," said Zhuge Liang. "Say no more, but be off quickly."

The two officers pleaded with him, saying that if he desired to kill them he had better do it there, for they dared not go.

“How silly you are!” Zhuge Liang said with a laugh. “Of course I know what I’m doing when I tell you to go. I observed the stars yesterday, and I see there will be heavy rain this month. The army of Wei may consist of any number of men, but will they dare to venture into a mountainous area? So there is no need to send a large force and no harm will come to you. The main army will rest in Hanzhong for a month. When the enemy retreats, I will smite them. My rested army of 100,000 will be able to withstand their weary force of four times the number.”

This explanation satisfied them and they left joyfully. Soon after, Zhuge Liang led the main body out to Hanzhong, where he ordered officers at every post to lay in one month’s stock of firewood, fodder, and grain against the autumn rains. The army was allowed a month’s time for relaxation before the expedition, with food and clothing issued in advance.

When Cao Zhen and Sima Yi reached Chencang and entered the city, they could not find a single house. They questioned some of the local people, who said that Zhuge Liang had burned everything before he left. Cao Zhen proposed to advance along the Chencang road, but Sima Yi opposed this, saying that the stars foretold much rain during the month.

“Once we move deep inside the enemy’s land,” he added, “if we are always victorious all will be well. But if we lose, it won’t be easy to pull out and our men and horses will suffer. Better remain in this city and build what shelter we can against the rain.”

Cao Zhen followed his advice. Less than half a month later the rains began, and came down in a deluge, burying the

surrounding country under three feet of water. The weapons were soaked, and the men could get no sleep. For thirty days the downpour continued. Many horses died due to lack of forage, and the men grumbled incessantly. Reports of this were sent to Luoyang, and the Emperor himself prayed for fine weather, but to no effect.

At this time, an official named Wang Su presented a memorial:

"It is mentioned in an earlier book of history that when supplies have to be conveyed from a long distance soldiers look starved—if firewood has to be gathered before a meal can be cooked then they are not fully fed when they go to bed. This applies to conventional expeditions on level land. If, in addition, the army has to march through a precipitous region where roads have to be constructed, the hardship is a hundredfold greater. Now this expedition is hindered further by soaking rain and steep and slippery hills. Our men's movement is restricted and their supplies, coming from afar, can hardly be maintained. These factors are most detrimental to a military expedition.

"Cao Zhen has been away over a month yet has only crawled halfway through the Meridian Valley. As road-making is consuming all the energy of our men, the enemy will be able to press on our soldiers with their fresh forces. This is what soldiers dread most.

"Here I would like to cite examples from earlier times. When King Wu of old attacked the last emperor of the Shang Dynasty, he went out through the pass, but returned. In recent times, when your father and grandfather went to attack Sun

Quan, they reached the Yangtze, and proceeded no farther. Were they not flexible in their tactics and acted according to circumstances? I entreat Your Majesty to consider the grave difficulties caused by the rain and call off this expedition to rest the officers and men. When another opportunity looms large in future, a new expedition can be launched. As the saying goes: 'Show concern for the men in times of difficulties and they will defy death.'"

After reading it the Emperor could not make up his mind, but two more memorials of the same nature followed, and then he issued the command to call back the two generals.

Among the ranks of the army they were also discussing the abandonment of the expedition. Cao Zhen said, "We've had rain for a whole month. The men are downhearted and think only of going home. How can we stop them?"

Sima Yi replied, "We'd better return."

"If Zhuge Liang pursues, how can we repulse him?"

"We can leave two troops in ambush to guard our rear before we depart."

While they were discussing this matter the Emperor's new order arrived. So the army faced about and slowly marched homeward.

Now Zhuge Liang had calculated that this month of rain would soon be over and so had personally led a force to camp in Chenggu before th weather turned fine. Then he ordered the whole army to assemble at Red Slope. In his tent he

addressed the officers: “I presume the enemy will retreat, for their ruler will call them back. As they will be prepared for our pursuit, we will just let them leave and think of some other plans later.”

Soon Wang Ping sent news of the enemy’s retreat and the order of no pursuit was carried in return.

It is only labor lost to cover a retreat
When your enemy does not pursue.

By what means Zhuge Liang intended to defeat Wei will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED

Cao Zhen Is Defeated in a Raid on His Camp by the Shu Army

Zhuge Liang Shames Sima Yi in Front of an Array

When the officers heard of Zhuge Liang's order to not pursue the retreating Wei army, they argued, "The rain has driven the enemy away—surely this is the moment to pursue."

Zhuge Liang replied, "Sima Yi is an able commander, and will not retreat without leaving an ambush to cover his back. If we pursue we'll fall into his trap. Let him go in peace, and I will advance through Ye Valley to occupy Qishan, taking advantage of the enemy's lack of defense."

"But there are other ways of capturing Chang'an," they said. "Why only take this route?"

"Qishan is the gateway to Chang'an. It is situated in an advantageous position. Any army from Longxi must pass this way. Besides, with the Wei River in front and Ye Valley behind, it gives the army the greatest freedom of movement. It is strategically valuable, so I want to seize it first."

They bowed in admiration of his wisdom. Then he dispatched four officers to move from Qi Valley and four others from Ye

Valley, all to meet at Qishan. He led the main army himself, with Guan Xing and Liao Hua in the van.

Meanwhile, Cao Zhen and Sima Yi were in the rear of their army, supervising the retreat. They sent a reconnaissance troop to the old road to Chencang, and the men returned to say that no enemy came to pursue. Ten days later the officers who had been waiting in ambush for the Shu army, also returned, declaring that they had seen no sign of the enemy.

Cao Zhen said, "This continuous autumn rain has rendered all the ways impassable—how could the men of Shu know of our retreat?"

"They will appear soon enough," said Sima Yi.

"How do you know?"

"These days the weather has been fine yet they don't pursue because they're afraid of our men waiting in ambush. Therefore they let us get well away. But after we're gone, they will occupy Qishan."

Cao Zhen was not convinced.

"Why do you doubt my words?" asked Sima Yi. "I think Zhuge Liang will certainly advance through the two valleys. Let each of us guard the entrance of one valley. I give them ten days, and if they don't appear, I will come to your camp dressed as a woman with a painted face to admit my mistake."

"If the men of Shu do appear I will give you the jade girdle and the steed that the Emperor gave me," replied Cao Zhen.

So saying they split their force, Cao Zhen taking up his position to the west of Qishan in the mouth of Ye Valley, while Sima Yi encamped to the east in the entrance to Qi Valley.

As soon as the camp was settled, Sima Yi led a small force into hiding in the valley. The remainder of the force was placed in detachments on the key roads. Then Sima Yi disguised himself and mixed among the soldiers to survey all the camps. At one of them he stopped as he heard a junior officer complaining, his eyes turned skyward, "The rain has drenched us for days and they would not retreat. Now they have halted here again just for a wager. They have no pity for us officers and men."

Sima Yi returned to his tent and assembled his officers. Hauling out the grumbler, he said to him angrily, "The state keeps the army a thousand days inactive so that it can be used for a single service. How dare you give vent to your spleen to the detriment of the army's morale?"

The man would not admit, so his comrades were called to bear witness. And he could not deny.

"I am not here for a wager, but to overcome Shu so that all of you can return with merit," said Sima Yi. "You bring punishment to yourself by complaining improperly."

He ordered the man to be put to death, and very soon the victim's head was brought before him. The others were terrified.

Sima Yi said, “All of you must do your utmost to guard against the enemy. When you hear a bomb explode in the center, rush out on all sides and attack.”

At this order they withdrew.

Now Wei Yan and three others, leading 20,000 men, were advancing by way of Qi Valley. As they were marching, the advisor Deng Zhi arrived. They asked him the reason for his appearance.

“I bear an order from the prime minister: Beware of the enemy’s ambush as you go out of the valley. Don’t advance in haste.”

Chen Shi objected, “Why is the prime minister so full of doubts? I reckon the incessant rain has damaged the clothing and armor of the men of Wei and they must be anxious to return home. How can there be any ambush? If we move in double time we can gain a great victory. Why are we to delay?”

Deng Zhi replied, “You know the prime minister’s plans always succeed. How dare you disobey his orders?”

Chen Shi smiled. “If he was really so resourceful we would not have lost Jieting.”

Wei Yan, recalling that Zhuge Liang had formerly rejected his plan, also laughed. “If he had listened to me and gone out through the Meridian Valley, not only Chang’an but Luoyang, too, would have been ours. Now he is bent on taking Qishan—but what is the good of it? He gave us the order to

advance and now he wants us to stop. How confusing his orders are!"

Chen Shi continued, "You know what I will do. I will take my 5,000 men and go straight out of Qi Valley to be the first to camp at Qishan. See how ashamed the prime minister will look!"

Deng Zhi tried in vain to prevent him, but the willful officer hurried out of the valley with his troop. Deng Zhi could only return as quickly as possible to report to Zhuge Liang.

Meanwhile, Chen Shi proceeded. He had gone only a few li when he heard a bomb, and instantly he was hard-pressed from all sides. Hastily he tried to withdraw, but all the exits from the valley were covered by the enemy, and he was trapped as though in an iron cask. All his efforts to get out failed. Suddenly there sounded deafening shouts as Wei Yan came to his rescue. Chen Shi was saved but his 5,000 men were reduced to a mere one-tenth of wounded soldiers. The Wei army pursued. Fortunately, the other two Shu officers came up and finally the men of Wei retreated. The loss at last convinced Chen Shi and Wei Yan of Zhuge Liang's marvelous prevision. They regretted very much their shortsightedness.

When Deng Zhi told the prime minister of their insolence, he only laughed. "Wei Yan has always shown a rebellious spirit—I know he often resents me. However, I pity him for his valor and so I have kept him in my service, but he will do real harm some day."

Then came a messenger with news of Chen Shi's defeat and the loss of many men. Zhuge Liang sent Deng Zhi back again to console the officer and so keep him from actual mutiny.

Then he called to his tent Ma Dai and Wang Ping and said to them: "If Ye Valley is guarded by our enemy, I want you two to go across the hills, marching by night and concealing yourselves by day, and swiftly make for the east of Qishan. When you arrive, light a fire as a signal."

Ma Zhong and Zhang Yi were told to go in similar fashion to the west of Qishan and combine with the other two forces. Then the four of them were to make a joint attack on Cao Zhen's camp. Zhuge Liang would also attack in the center to complete a three-sided assault. The four officers took the orders and left. Lastly, Guan Xing and Liao Hua received secret orders and departed as well.

Zhuge Liang led his force of veterans and marched rapidly. On the way two other detachments, led by Wu Ban and Wu Yi, received secret orders and left ahead of the main body.

Now Cao Zhen, who disbelieved that the Shu army would come, was negligent in his defense, allowing his men to rest. He was only waiting for the ten days to pass calmly.

Seven of the days had passed, when a scout reported seeing a few odd men of Shu coming out of the valley. Cao Zhen sent Qin Liang with 5,000 men to reconnoiter and keep them at bay. So the officer led the men to the entrance of the valley but as soon as he arrived the Shu troops withdrew. Qin Liang followed them for about sixty li, but they had simply

disappeared. Perplexed, he ordered his men to dismount and rest.

But almost immediately scouts reported an enemy ambush ahead. He mounted his horse to look and saw a whirling cloud of dust rise in the hills. He hastily ordered his men to prepare for battle. In no time thunderous shouting resounded from the four sides. In front of him were Wu Ban and Wu Yi and behind him Guan Xing and Liao Hua. Retreat was impossible, as the right and left were blocked by hills, and from the hilltops came shouts of "Dismount and yield!"

Most of the Wei men surrendered. Qin Liang fought desperately but was killed by Liao Hua. Zhuge Liang put the defected Wei soldiers in the rear. With their clothes and arms he disguised his own men so that they looked like his enemies, and then he sent this division, under Guan Xing, Liao Hua, and the two Wus, to raid Cao Zhen's camp. A messenger was sent ahead to tell Cao Zhen that there had been only a few scouts of Shu and they had all been chased out of sight, and so lull him into a false sense of security.

This news satisfied Cao Zhen. But just then a trusty messenger from Sima Yi was announced. Cao Zhen summoned him inside and questioned him.

The man said, "The vice commander employed ambuscades and killed more than 4,000 men of Shu. He told me to tell you, Commander, not to think any more about the wager but to take most careful precautions against the enemy."

"But there is not a single Shu soldier here," said Cao Zhen.

He sent the messenger back. After a while he was told that Qin Liang's men had returned, and he went out to meet them. Just as he got near, there came reports of two fires in the front and rear of his camp. He hastened to turn back to investigate, but it was too late. The four Shu officers waved on their men and dashed up to attack the camp from the front. At the same time Ma Dai and Wang Ping came up behind and Ma Zhong and Zhang Yi also joined in.

Caught unprepared, the men of Wei scattered and ran for their lives. Cao Zhen, protected by his officers, fled toward the east, chased by the Shu army. As he was fleeing there arose a great shouting, and up came a troop at full speed. Cao Zhen's heart sank at this but it was Sima Yi, whose men fought fiercely and finally drove off the pursuers.

Though Cao Zhen was saved, he was almost too ashamed to show his face.

Sima Yi said, "Zhuge Liang has seized Qishan, and we mustn't remain here for long. Let's move on to the banks of the Wei River, where we may plan how to recover our lost ground."

"How did you know I was being defeated?" asked Cao Zhen.

"My messenger told me that there was not a single man of Shu in your place, and I reckoned Zhuge Liang would try to seize your camp. So I came to your aid. And you have already fallen into his trap. But let's forget about the wager. We must both do our best for the country."

But the mortification was too bitter to bear and Cao Zhen fell ill, confined to his bed. The army camped by the riverside. Sima Yi, afraid to cause further disorder in the army, dared not advise Cao Zhen to return.

At the same time, Zhuge Liang once again advanced through Qishan in full force. After the army had feasted, Wei Yan and his three comrades came into the tent and knelt down to admit their guilt.

"Who caused the loss?" asked Zhuge Liang.

Wei Yan said, "Chen Shi disobeyed the order and rushed into the valley, so we were routed."

"Wei Yan told me to do so," said Chen Shi.

"He rescued you yet you want to shift the blame on to him," said Zhuge Liang. "However, you have disobeyed the order and it is useless to argue."

Chen Shi was sentenced to death and was led away. Soon his head was brought into the tent and shown to the assembled officers. Wei Yan was spared as there was yet work for him to accomplish.

After this, Zhuge Liang prepared to advance further. Just then, scouts reported that Cao Zhen was ill and was being treated by doctors in his camp. Pleased with this news, Zhuge Liang said, "If he isn't seriously ill they will surely return to Chang'an. But now they don't withdraw, which means he's quite sick. And they keep him with the army so that his men

won't lose heart. Now I will write him a letter and let his surrendered soldiers take it back to him. That will finish him."

Then he summoned the men of Wei who had yielded and said to them, "You are Wei men and your families are all over there—it is not right for you to stay here for long. Suppose I let you go home?"

Weeping with joy they prostrated themselves before him in gratitude. Then Zhuge Liang continued, "Cao Zhen and I have an agreement, and I would like you to take a letter to him. The bearer will be well rewarded."

They took the letter and ran back to their own camp, where they presented the letter. Ill as he was, Cao Zhen sat up and opened it to read:

> The Prime Minister of Han, Zhuge Liang, to Commander Cao:
>
> I believe that the commander of an army should be able to make an attack or cease one, to be pliable or obdurate, to advance or retreat, to show tenderness or exhibit strength. He should be immovable as mountains, inscrutable as the workings of nature, infinite as the universe, overflowing as the largest granary in the capital city, vast as the four seas, dazzling as the lights of the sky. He can foresee droughts and floods, know the nature of the terrain, understand the possibilities of battle formations, and recognize the enemy's strengths and weaknesses.

> Alas! you ignorant fellow! You had the presumption to assist a rebel to assume the throne in Luoyang against the will of Heaven. You fled with your beaten army at Ye Valley and were drenched in the rain at Chencang. Smitten both on land and in water, your men and horses were thrown into frenzy. Abandoned weapons and armor littered the fields, swords and spears covered the ground. You, the commander-in-chief, were scared out of your wits and your officers fled like rats. You are too ashamed to face the folks in the north, nor have you the courage to enter the hall of the prime minister. The historians' pens will record and the people will spread the tale by word of mouth: Sima Yi is frightened when he hears of a battle, and Cao Zhen is startled at the mere rumor of combat. My men are fierce and their steeds strong; my great officers are brave as tigers and majestic as dragons. I will raze the northern land to the ground and reduce Wei to a wasteland.

Cao Zhen's heart burst with wrath as he finished reading the letter. He died that evening. His remains were carried in a wagon and sent to Luoyang for burial.

When the Wei Emperor heard of his death, he issued an edict urging Sima Yi to continue the war with Shu, who then led his army to fight with Zhuge Liang. A challenge of war was sent to the Shu camp in advance.

Zhuge Liang said to his officers, "Cao Zhen must have died." Then he wrote on the letter of challenge, "Meet in battle tomorrow." The messenger left. That night Zhuge Liang

called Jiang Wei and gave him a secret order. He also summoned Guan Xing and told him what to do.

The next morning Zhuge Liang marched the whole force to the banks of the Wei River. It was an ideal battleground! A wide expanse of level land was flanked on the one side by the mighty river and on the other by the undulating hills. The two armies faced each other, both with archers in front to protect their battle lines. After the drums had rolled thrice the Wei center opened and Sima Yi appeared, followed by his officers. Opposite was Zhuge Liang seated in state in a four-wheeled chariot, waving his feather fan.

Sima Yi addressed him: "My lord's ascension of the throne was after the manner of Yao's abdication in favor of Shun. Firmly established in the northern territory, our dynasty has seen two emperors reign. Because of his liberality and graciousness, my lord has allowed Shu and Wu to exist so that the people would not be hurt. You are but a peasant from Nanyang, ignorant of the ways of Heaven, yet you insist on invading us. Indeed, you ought to be destroyed. But if you will repent your fault, you can retreat as soon as possible. Let each of the three kingdoms hold to its own borders to maintain a settled state of tripartite rule. Thus the people may be spared distress, and you will all save your lives."

Zhuge Liang smiled. "Our late emperor entrusted to me the custody of his orphan son. Do you think I will fail to exert myself to the uttermost to destroy rebels? The House of Cao will soon be exterminated by Han. Your ancestors were servants of the Hans and for generations enjoyed their bounty. Yet, instead of repaying them with your service, you assist usurpers. Are you not ashamed?"

The flush of shame spread over Sima Yi's face, but he replied: "I will fight a decisive battle with you and we will see who will emerge the winner. If you win, I will step down from my post as commander; but if you lose, then you must go back quickly to your village—I will not harm you."

"Do you desire a contest of officers, or of weapons, or of battle formations?" asked Zhuge Liang.

"Let us try a contest of battle formations first," replied Sima Yi.

"Then draw up your array for me to see," said Zhuge Liang.

Sima Yi withdrew within the line and signaled with a yellow flag to order his officers to draw up their men. When he had finished, he rode again to the front and asked, "Do you recognize my formation?"

"My officers of the lowest rank can do that," said Zhuge Liang, smiling. "This is called the Hun-yuan-yi-qi formation."

"Now you try while I look on," said Sima Yi.

Zhuge Liang entered his lines and waved his fan. Appearing again moments later he asked, "Do you recognize that?"

"Of course—this is the Eight-Gates Formation."

"Well, if you know it, do you dare to attack it?"

"Why not, since I know it?" replied Sima Yi.

"Go ahead then."

Sima Yi entered the ranks and called to him three officers, Dai Ling, Zhang Hu, and Yue Lin, to whom he said: "That formation consists of eight gates, each with a special name. Enter from the Gate of Life in the east, then make your way out through the Gate of Repose in the southwest, and finally enter the Gate of Clearing in the north. Then the formation will be broken up. But be cautious."

They set out with Zhang Hu leading, Dai Ling next, and Yue Lin in the rear, each with thirty horsemen. They made their way through the Gate of Life amid cheers from both sides. But when they had got within they found themselves facing walls of troops and could not find a way out. They hastily turned toward the southwest to rush out that way, but their attempt was aborted by a flight of arrows. The formation seemed to compose layer after layer and gate after gate, and they completely lost their bearings. Unable to help one another, they dashed aimlessly hither and thither in disorder, terrified to see themselves enshrouded by a rolling mass of melancholy clouds and doleful mists. Then a shouting arose, and each one of them was seized and bound and then taken to the central tent.

Zhuge Liang sat in his tent, and the three officers with their ninety men were brought before him.

"It is nothing remarkable to capture you lot," said Zhuge Liang, smiling. "I will set you free and let you return to Sima Yi. Tell him to read his books and study his strategies again before he attempts to enter a contest with me. I have spared

your lives, but you must leave behind your weapons and horses."

So, stripped of their clothes and with their faces blackened, they were made to walk back to their line. At the sight of them Sima Yi lost his temper. Turning to his officers, he cried, "After such a disgrace, how can we go back and face the court officials in the capital?"

He ordered the front, center, and rear forces of the whole army to break the enemy formation at all costs, and, grasping his sword, led his hundred bravest officers into the fray and urged his men to attack. But just as the two sides came to blows, from behind the northern army rose the rolling of drums and blaring of horns, and a force led by Guan Xing came up from the southwest and attacked. Sima Yi assigned a division from the rear to oppose him, and again turned to urge on his main body.

Suddenly the army of Wei was thrown into confusion by another attack by Jiang Wei, who came up silently and joined in the battle. Thus the Wei army was engaged on three sides by three different divisions of the enemy, and Sima Yi, now greatly startled, decided to retreat. But the men of Shu trapped him and gradually closed in. At last, with a desperate push, he forced an opening toward the south and broke through. But he had lost six or seven out of every ten of his soldiers.

The Wei army withdrew to the south bank of the Wei River and camped. Then they strengthened their defensive position.

Zhuge Liang mustered his victorious army and returned to Qishan.

At that time Li Yan of Yongan sent his officer, named Gou An, to deliver a convoy of grain. This man indulged in alcohol and loitered on the road, so that he arrived ten days late. Wrathful at the delay, Zhuge Liang upbraided him: "Grain is of the utmost importance to the army. Three days' delay is to be punished by death. Now you are late by ten days, what can you say to that?"

He ordered the man to be taken out and put to death at once.

Yang Yi interceded. "Gou An is in the service of Li Yan, whose governing area in West Chuan is affluent in money and grain. If you put this man to death, no one there will dare to deliver grain again."

Zhuge Liang then told the executioners to loosen the bonds and lessened the penalty to eighty blows. Then the man was allowed to leave. Filled with resentment for this punishment, Gou An took his half dozen followers and deserted to the enemy that night. He was taken before Sima Yi, to whom he related his wrongs.

"Your tale may be true, but it is hard to trust it," said Sima Yi. "Zhuge Liang is full of guile. However, if you can render me a great service, I will ask the Emperor to make you a general of rank."

"Whatever you ask I will do my best," replied the deserter.

"Go to your capital and spread a tale that Zhuge Liang harbors a grudge against his lord and will one day assume the throne himself. This will get him recalled. That is the service I want from you."

Gou An accepted the treacherous mission. In the capital he told his wicked tale to some of the eunuchs, who became alarmed and brought it before the Second Ruler.

“If that is true, what am I to do?” asked the Second Ruler, greatly surprised.

“Recall him to the capital,” said the eunuchs, “and deprive him of his military power to avoid rebellion.”

Accordingly the Emperor issued an edict to recall the army.

Jiang Wan asked, “The prime minister has repeatedly won victories since he departed for the expedition. Why is he recalled?”

“I have a private matter to discuss with him personally,” said the Second Ruler.

So the edict was issued and dispatched to Zhuge Liang. The messenger at once set out to the main camp in Qishan, where he was received by the prime minister and the edict delivered.

“The Emperor is young, and there must be some wicked officials by his side,” said Zhuge Liang with a deep sigh. “I’m on the verge of achieving some major success—why am I recalled? If I don’t go, I will be disobeying my Emperor—but if I withdraw, I will never get such a chance again.”

“If the army withdraws, Sima Yi will attack,” said Jiang Wei. “What must we do?”

"I will divide the army into five divisions and withdraw in the following way. Today the first division will go. Suppose there are a thousand men in the camp, then prepare two thousand cooking places; tomorrow, prepare three thousand; the day after, four thousand and so on. Increase the cooking places as the men are gradually withdrawn."

Yang Yi said, "In the days of old, when Sun Bin was attacking Pang Juan, he decreased cooking places as the men were increased. Why do you reverse this, sir?"

"Sima Yi is an able commander and will pursue if he knows we are retreating. But as he will be wary of an ambush, he will send his men to count the cooking places in our camp; the increase of those will leave him in doubt as to whether our men have gone or not, and he won't pursue. Thus we can withdraw without loss."

The order for retreat was given.

Meanwhile Sima Yi, who anticipated that Gou An would have worked harm, waited for the retreat of the Shu army to begin his operation. He was still waiting when scouts told him that the enemy's camps were empty. However, he did not order immediate pursuit for fear this would be another of Zhuge Liang's ruses. Instead, he rode out himself with a small scouting party to inspect the empty camps. There he told his men to count the cooking places. The next day he sent men back to the same camp and again the cooking places were counted. They reported that there was an increase of a tenth.

"I knew Zhuge Liang was up to his tricks. And sure enough, he has increased his men as the increase of cooking places

shows. If we pursue, he will be ready for us. Better retreat and await another opportunity."

So there was no pursuit, and Zhuge Liang returned to the capital without losing a single man.

Later Sima Yi was informed by local inhabitants that when Zhuge Liang retreated they had seen him increase the cooking places, but not the number of men.

Casting his eyes heavenward, Sima Yi heaved a deep sigh. "Zhuge Liang has tricked me again. He is really too resourceful for me."

And so he led his army back to Luoyang.

When players of equal skill are matched, then victory hovers between;
When talents of the same depth meet, then conceit quietly leaves.

What happened when Zhuge Liang reached the capital will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

Leaving Longshang Zhuge Liang Disguises Himself as a God

Hurrying to Sword Pass Zhang He Falls into a Trap

By means of the artifice just described, Zhuge Liang withdrew his army safely into Hanzhong, whereas Sima Yi also retreated to Chang'an. Zhuge Liang distributed rewards to his officers and men for their services and then went to the capital to see the Second Ruler.

"Your Majesty recalled me just as I was on the point of seizing Chang'an," he said. "What is the important matter?"

The Second Ruler could not reply. After quite a while he said, "I missed you very much so I called you back. That is all."

Zhuge Liang replied, "I do not think that was your own intention. Some slanderous courtier must have put the idea into Your Majesty's head that I cherished ulterior motives."

Hearing this the Second Ruler fell silent, unable to answer.

Zhuge Liang continued, "I owe your late father such great kindness that I pledged to devote my life to his great design. But if vile influences are permitted to work at home, how can I destroy the rebels without?"

“It was wrong of me to listen to the talk of some eunuchs and recall you on an impulse. Now it is all clear to me and I regret it very much.”

Zhuge Liang interrogated the eunuchs and thus found out the rumor had stemmed from Gou An. He at once ordered the man to be arrested, but the traitor had already fled to Wei. The eunuchs who had influenced the Second Ruler were put to death, and all the others were expelled from the palace. He also upbraided Jiang Wan and Fei Yi severely for failing to detect evil persons and advise the Emperor correctly.

Zhuge Liang then took leave of the Second Ruler and returned to Hanzhong, where he immediately began preparations for a new expedition. A message was sent to Li Yan, ordering him to supervise the necessary supplies for the army.

Yang Yi said, “The soldiers were wearied during previous expeditions, and the supplies were not regular. I think this time we can divide our men into two bodies. First, send half the army to Qishan for three months, and at the end of that time exchange them for the other half, and so on, alternately. In this way, their energies will be conserved and we can work steadily toward the conquest of the north.”

“That’s exactly what I’d like to do,” said Zhuge Liang. “The conquest of the north is not a matter to be achieved in haste. We really must develop a longterm plan.”

Therefore the army was divided, and each half would campaign for one hundred days at a time, after which it would be relieved by the other force. Full penalties would be

enforced for any laxity and failure to maintain the periods of active service.

In the spring of the ninth year of Jian Xing the army once more took the field against Wei. In Wei it was the fifth year of the reign of Tai He.

When the Emperor of Wei heard of this new invasion he summoned Sima Yi at once and asked him for advice.

"Now that my friend Cao Zhen is no more, I am willing to do all I can to destroy the rebels."

The Emperor was gratified by this ready offer, and honored Sima Yi with a banquet. The following day came urgent news of Shu's attack and the army was ordered to move without delay. The Emperor, riding in his state chariot, escorted Sima Yi out of the city. Then Sima Yi took the road to Chang'an, where he met with leaders of various forces for a council of war against Shu.

Zhang He offered to guard Yong and Mei, but Sima Yi said, "Our front division is not strong enough to face the enemy's whole force. If we further divide our army it won't be a wise scheme. Perhaps it's better to leave a troop to guard Shanggui while the rest of us all move to Qishan. Will you lead the van?"

Exhilarated, Zhang He said, "I have always been most loyal and wish to devote myself entirely to the service of the state. So far I have not met a commander who really appreciated my sincerity, but now that you confer upon me a post of such responsibility, I will defy any sacrifice."

So Zhang He was appointed van leader while Guo Huai was told to hold the various districts in Longxi. The other officers marched with the major army along different routes.

Scouts ascertained that the main force of Shu was directed toward Qishan, and their van leaders, Wang Ping and Zhang Ni, had left Chencang and crossed Sword Pass to reach Ye Valley via San Pass.

Hearing this, Sima Yi said to Zhang He: "Zhuge Liang is advancing in full force. He certainly intends to reap the wheat in Longxi for his army's provisions. You camp here to hold Qishan, while Guo Huai and I will go over to Tianshui to foil the enemy's plan to gather the harvest."

So Zhang He took 40,000 men to hold Qishan, and Sima Yi went westwards to Longxi.

When Zhuge Liang reached Qishan and had encamped his men, he saw that the bank of the River Wei had been fortified by his enemy.

"That must be the work of Sima Yi," he remarked to his officers. "But we haven't enough food. I have repeatedly sent people to urge Li Yan to send grain, but so far it has not yet arrived. I reckon the wheat in Longxi is now just ripe. Let us go quietly and reap it."

Leaving four officers to guard the camp, Zhuge Liang, with Jiang Wei, Wei Yan, and others, went over to Lucheng. The prefect of that city, who had long known Zhuge Liang's reputation, opened the gates and yielded. Zhuge Liang learned from him that the wheat in Longshang was ready to be

harvested. So leaving two officers to defend the city, he led the remainder of the army to Longshang.

But soon the leading body reported that Sima Yi had already positioned his army there.

“So that man guessed what I intended to do!” said Zhuge Liang, taken aback.

Zhuge Liang then bathed and changed his attire. He told his men to push out three identical four-wheeled chariots with exactly the same decorations. These chariots had been built in Shu sometime before and were among the baggage of the army.

Jiang Wei was told to lead a troop of 1,500 and hide beyond the city, where a thousand soldiers were to escort a chariot and five hundred to beat drums. In like manner, Wei Yan and Ma Dai were assigned the two other chariots and sent to the east and the west of the city. Each chariot was propelled by a team of twenty-four men, all dressed in black, barefooted, and with loosened hair. Each one of the team also held a sword and a black, seven-starred bannerol.

While the chariots were taking up their positions, the remaining 30,000 men were ordered to prepare ropes and sickles to cut and carry away the grain. Next Zhuge Liang selected twenty-four handsome soldiers dressed and armed in the same fashion as the charioteers of the other three chariots. These soldiers were to man his own chariot. Guan Xing was told to dress up as a heavenly general and to walk in front of Zhuge Liang’s chariot holding a black, seven-starred

bannerol. The preparations complete, Zhuge Liang mounted the chariot and headed toward the Wei camp.

The appearance of a chariot with such attendants more than startled the enemy's scouts, who did not know whether the apparition was that of a man or a demon. They hastened to tell their commander about this. Sima Yi came out to see for himself. There was Zhuge Liang seated in his chariot, dressed as a Taoist mystic with his headdress, white robe, and a feather fan, surrounded by twenty-four men armed with swords, all with their hair down, and preceded by a god-like figure carrying a black bannerol.

"Some of Zhuge Liang's tricks again," he said, and he ordered a couple of thousand men to go out and seize the chariot and its escort.

The Wei soldiers went out to give chase, but seeing this, Zhuge Liang ordered the chariot to retreat slowly toward the Shu camp. As the men of Wei galloped onward, they felt a chilly breeze and a cold mist rolling about them. Mounted as they were, they could not catch up with the procession.

They found it uncanny and halted. "How odd!" they said to one another. "We've been pressing on for thirty li and yet we get no nearer. What does it mean?"

When Zhuge Liang saw that the pursuit had ceased, he had his chariot turned back again to rest before the pursuers. They hesitated for quite some time, but were later tempted to take up the chase once more. Upon this the chariot again turned and retreated, proceeding slowly. And thus another twenty li

were covered but to the pursuers, the chariot was always in sight yet never within reach.

The Wei soldiers halted again, stunned at this puzzling pursuit. But as they stopped, the chariot came again toward them. They were about to resume the chase when Sima Yi came up with a strong force and stopped them.

He said to his men, "Zhuge Liang is an old master in the Taoist magic. This trick of his is recorded in the Book of Heaven as 'Shortening the distance'—it's futile to pursue."

So they ceased following. But the moment they turned back, a roll of drums from their left indicated the arrival of the enemy. Sima Yi at once ordered his men to repel them, but to their astonishment, from the midst of the Shu soldiers there came into view a chariot with Zhuge Liang seated in it, accompanied by twenty-four men, the exact replica of the procession he had just seen.

"But just now he was sitting in that other chariot—how can he be here? It's most weird," cried Sima Yi in disbelief.

Hardly had he finished speaking than another roll of drums rose from their right, and there appeared another body of men, with an identical chariot and escort in the midst, complete with the seated figure of Zhuge Liang.

"These must be heavenly soldiers," said Sima Yi, filled with fear.

The men, spooked by these mysterious appearances, began to get restless. Not daring to fight such beings, they fled. But

before they had gone far, lo!—another roll of drums, another cohort, and yet another chariot appeared, with yet another figure of Zhuge Liang seated therein.

The men of Wei were now thoroughly frightened, and even Sima Yi himself was much alarmed, not knowing whether these phantoms should be ascribed to men or ghosts. So he and his men fled in disorder, not stopping until they reached Shanggui. Once inside the city, they closed the gates and refused to go out.

In the meantime, Zhuge Liang's 30,000 men had already reaped the wheat and carried it into Lucheng to winnow and dry.

Sima Yi remained behind the protection of the city walls for three days. Only when he saw his enemy had left did he dare to send out some scouts, who presently returned with a Shu soldier they had captured. The prisoner was questioned.

"I was of the reaping party," confessed the man. "My horse had wandered away so I was caught."

"What magic soldiers were those of yours that we saw here lately?" asked Sima Yi.

The man replied, "The prime minister was not with the three ambushing forces. These officers were Jiang Wei, Ma Dai, and Wei Yan. Each force had only one thousand fighting men and five hundred drummers. He was only in the first chariot that came to induce you."

“His comings and goings are as mysterious as those of a god or a demon,” said Sima Yi in resignation.

Just then Guo Huai came to see him. After exchanging greetings, Guo Huai said, “I hear the enemy has only a small force in Lucheng, occupied with winnowing the grain—why not smite them?”

Sima Yi told him his last experience with his opponent’s wiles.

“He succeeded in throwing dust in your eyes once,” said Guo Huai with a smile. “But now that you have seen through his ruse, it is absolutely useless. Let me go and attack Lucheng from the rear, while you lead a troop to storm the front. We will take the city and capture Zhuge Liang, too.”

Sima Yi approved and the army departed by two routes to attack Lucheng.

At Lucheng the men of Shu were busy gathering in the wheat. Suddenly Zhuge Liang called up his officers and said, “The enemy will attack tonight. I presume there is enough space for an ambush in the newly reaped fields. Who dares to go for me?”

Four officers offered themselves, and he posted them with 4,000 men at the southeast, northwest, southwest, and northeast corners of the city. They were to await a signal and then converge to withstand the enemy. When these had gone, Zhuge Liang led out about a hundred men, each carrying explosives, and hid in the newly reaped wheat fields.

When Sima Yi reached the walls of Lucheng the sun had already gone down. He said to his officers, “If we attacked by daylight we should find the city well prepared, so we will take advantage of the darkness. The moat is shallow and the walls are low here. There will be no difficulty in overcoming it.”

The men bivouacked to wait till the time to attack. At about the first watch Guo Huai also arrived, and the two forces converged. Then drums began to beat and the city was quickly surrounded tightly on all sides. However, the defenders maintained such a heavy discharge of arrows, bolts, and stones from the walls that the besiegers dared not close in.

Suddenly from the midst of the Wei army sounded signal explosions. The soldiers were startled, but no one could tell where the enemy was coming from. Guo Huai sent his men to search the wheat fields. But all at once, from the four corners rose towering flames and roaring shouts, and the four Shu forces rushed forth to fall upon the Wei army. At the same time the four city gates were thrown widely open and the men inside also burst out to support their comrades. A great battle ensued, and Wei suffered heavy losses.

After desperate fighting Sima Yi extricated his beaten army from the press and occupied a hill, while Guo Huai got round to the rear of the hill and encamped. Zhuge Liang returned to the city and the four officers were ordered to camp at the four corners of the walls.

Guo Huai went to see his chief and said, “We have been at close quarters with the enemy for a long time yet we have no

way to drive them off. Now we have lost another fight, and unless something is done we won't get away at all."

"What can we do?" asked Sima Yi.

"You can write to officers at Yong and Liang and order them to move their forces here to help. I will lead my men to attack Sword Pass and cut off Zhuge Liang's retreat and intercept his supplies. That should result in confusion among his men and our chances for victory will come."

Sima Yi agreed and the letters were dispatched. Soon, Sun Li came leading the forces of the two districts. He was sent to help Guo Huai in the attack on Sword Pass.

Now Zhuge Liang had been holding Lucheng for many days, but the Wei army did not show up. Thinking it was time to make another move, he summoned Jiang Wei and Ma Dai inside the city and said to them: "The men of Wei are well posted on the hills and refuse to give battle. Presumably, they must have anticipated that we are short of food, and they must have sent an army to attack Sword Pass to cut off our supply route. Now I want each of you to take 10,000 men and garrison the strategic points. When they find us prepared they will retreat." The two took their orders and left.

Presently, Yang Yi came in to see Zhuge Liang. "Sir, formerly you ordered the army to alternate every hundred days. Now the time is due to relieve the forces. The troops from Hanzhong are already on their way and the documents for the exchange have arrived. All that remains to be done is the actual switch over. We have 80,000 men here, and half of them are due for exchange."

“All right. Let these leave quickly according to the order,” replied Zhuge Liang.

So the home-going troops packed up their belongings. Just then came the alarming news of Sun Li leading a huge army from Yong and Liang to assist in the attack on Sword Pass and of Sima Yi’s imminent attack on Lucheng. In the face of such a great danger, Yang Yi suggested keeping the replacement forces to withstand the enemy and not allowing them to leave until the new army had arrived.

Zhuge Liang objected: “I must keep faith with the men. Since the order for the periodical exchange of men has been issued it must be carried out. Besides, the men due to pull out are all ready to leave, and their parents, wives, and children are leaning against the gates, waiting for them to come home. Whatever great difficulty I face today I will not keep them here.”

Then he gave orders for the exchange soldiers to march homeward that very day. But when the soldiers heard the order, they were overwhelmed by the prime minister’s generosity, and they cried in unison that they preferred to risk their lives in fighting against the Wei army to show their gratitude to him.

“But you’re due to go home—you can’t stay here,” said Zhuge Liang.

But they insisted that they would stay to fight instead of going home.

“Since you wish to stay and fight for me, you can encamp outside the city. As soon as the men of Wei arrive, attack vigorously at once, without giving them any time to recover breath. This is the tactic of ‘Attacking the weary with a fresh force.’”

So they gripped their weapons and joyfully went out of the city to prepare themselves in readiness.

Now the men of Wei, who had traveled in double time, were worn out and badly in need of rest. But before they could pitch their tents for some repose the men of Shu fell upon them lustily, officers full of vigor, men filled with courage. The weary soldiers could make no proper stand, and retreated. The men of Shu followed, pressing on them till corpses littered the whole field and blood flowed in rivers.

It was a victory for Zhuge Liang, and he came out to welcome the victorious army into the city and distribute rewards among them.

Suddenly there arrived an urgent letter from Li Yan of Yongan. Zhuge Liang tore it open and read: “I have heard recently that Wu has sent an envoy to Luoyang and entered into an alliance with Wei, which has urged Wu to attack us. Fortunately the army of Wu has not yet set out, but I hope you, sir, will take quick actions.”

Doubts and fears crowded in upon Zhuge Liang’s mind as he read. He summoned his officers. “If Wu is coming to invade our land, I have to retreat quickly,” he said and immediately issued orders for the Qishan force to withdraw back into Shu. “Sima Yi won’t dare to pursue while we are camped here.”

The Qishan force broke camp and marched back in two divisions. Zhang He watched them go, but was too fearful of some hidden ruse in the retreat to attempt to follow. He went to see Sima Yi.

"The enemy has retreated for no apparent reasons."

"Zhuge Liang is full of tricks," said Sima Yi. "Remain where you are and keep a careful lookout. When they have exhausted their grain, they must retreat for good."

At this a general called Wei Ping stepped forward. "But we should seize the moment of their retreat to smite them," he said. "Yet you are afraid to move, Commander, as if they were tigers. How the world will laugh at us!"

Sima Yi, however, was resolutely opposed to pursuit.

When Zhuge Liang knew that the Qishan men had got away safely, he called Yang Yi and Ma Zhong and told them to lead 10,000 bowmen out to the Wooden Gate Trail at Sword Pass and place them in ambush on both sides of the road to wait for the men of Wei, if they came to pursue.

"When you hear the explosion of a signal bomb, roll down logs and rocks to barricade their way of retreat. Then shoot at them on two sides."

When they left he ordered Wei Yan and Guan Xing to guard the rear of the retreating army. Then a false image of occupation was prepared: the walls of the city were decorated lavishly with flags; piles of straw and fire-wood were stacked

here and there; and smoldering fires were set. Then the soldiers marched out toward the Wooden Gate Trail.

Spies of Wei returned to inform Sima Yi that the main force of the Shu army had departed, but they did not know how many were still left in the city. Sima Yi himself went to look, and there he saw the smoke rising from within the walls and the flags fluttering on the wall.

He smiled. “The city is deserted.”

Then he sent men in to confirm this, and they returned to say that the place was really empty.

Overjoyed, Sima Yi said, “So Zhuge Liang is really gone—who will pursue?”

“I will,” replied Zhang He.

“No, you’re too impulsive,” said Sima Yi.

“You appointed me leader of the van when you started for this expedition,” said Zhang He. “Why don’t you employ me today, when there is glory to be gained?”

“Although they are retreating, they will leave an ambush at every dangerous point. Utmost caution is needed to pursue.”

“I know that. Have no worries.”

“Well, you yourself wish to go. Don’t regret it later.”

“A real hero is ready to sacrifice himself for his country,” replied Zhang He. “I will never regret, even if I have to die a myriad deaths!”

“Since you’re determined to go, take 5,000 men and start out first. Let Wei Ping follow you with 20,000 infantry and cavalrymen, in case there are ambushes. I will come later with 3,000, to help where necessary.”

So Zhang He set out and advanced quickly. Thirty li onwards he heard a roll of drums, and suddenly there appeared from some woods a cohort led by a general of high rank, who reined in his steed and leveled his sword, crying, “Where do you think you are going, you rebel?”

Zhang He swiftly turned and engaged Wei Yan, for it was he who had come. But after a few passes Wei Yan feigned defeat and fled. Zhang He chased for another thirty li and then stopped to look back: there was no ambush whatsoever. Feeling secure, he galloped onward to pursue. But just as he rounded a slope, there arose yells and another body of soldiers came out.

“Zhang He, do not run away!” cried this officer, who was Guan Xing.

Guan Xing galloped close, and Zhang He dashed forth to fight with him, but after half a score of passes Guan Xing suddenly turned his steed and galloped away. Zhang He followed. Presently they neared a dense wood. Suspicious of an ambush, Zhang He sent his men to search the thickets. As they discovered no danger inside, Zhang He again pursued. But quite unexpectedly Wei Yan somehow got round ahead

of him and now appeared again. The two fought about a dozen bouts and again Wei Yan ran away. Zhang He followed angrily, but this time Guan Xing also got round ahead of him and barred his way. Zhang He, now provoked to fury, fought his opponent for about ten bouts. Then the men of Shu again ran away, abandoning all their armor and weapons. The road was thus littered with spoils and, unable to resist the temptation, the Wei men slipped from their horses and began to loot.

The same maneuver continued. Wei Yen and Guan Xing took turns to engage Zhang He, who pressed on undaunted. By evening they were close to the Wooden Gate Trail.

Suddenly Wei Yan swung round and yelled, "Zhang He, you rebel! I did not mean to fight you yet you followed me all this while. Now I will fight you to the death."

Zhang He, hot with indignation, plunged forth with his spear set to strike Wei Yan, who brandished his sword to meet him. After less than ten bouts, Wei Yan was thoroughly worsted and threw aside his clothes, armor, and helmet. With only his horse left he rode away along the Wooden Gate Trail, followed by his beaten troops. Zhang He's lust to kill was then fully roused. Seeing that Wei Yan had fled in sheer defeat, he set out after him, sensing no danger.

By that time darkness had gathered. Suddenly an explosion rocked the air and all at once the hills were illuminated by bright lights of flames. At the same time huge boulders and great chunks of timber came rolling down the slopes and blocked his way of escape.

“I’ve been trapped!” cried Zhang He in great alarm. Turning round hastily, he found the road behind already sealed. On his two sides were craggy precipices, leaving only a narrow strip of open space in the middle. Then, rat-tat-tat! came the sound of a rattle, and from two sides flew clouds of arrows and showers of bolts. Zhang He and his hundred or so officers were all killed in the trail.

With myriad shining bolts the air was filled,
The road was littered with brave soldiers killed;
People who travel by Sword Pass today
Still talk of the minister’s fame of old.

Soon the reinforcement troops of Wei came up, but too late to help. Finding the road blocked, they realized that their comrades had fallen victims to a trap, and they hastily turned back. But suddenly from the top of the hill people shouted: “Prime Minister Zhuge is here!”

Looking up, they saw his figure outlined against a fire. Pointing to the men of Wei below, he cried, “I have been hunting, as you see—only instead of slaying a horse I have killed a deer.* But you may go in peace, and when you see Sima Yi, tell him that he will be my quarry one of these days.”

The soldiers told this to Sima Yi when they returned, and he was deeply grieved, blaming himself for the death of his comrade Zhang He. Then he led his army back to Luoyang. The Emperor wept when he learned of the death of his brave general, and had his body honorably buried.

Meanwhile, Zhuge Liang had returned to Hanzhong and wanted to go on to the capital to see his lord. But before he set out, Li Yan, whose letter concerning the possible attack from Wu had resulted in the withdrawl of the Shu army, said to the Second Ruler falsely: “I have prepared all the supplies for the army and will send them on to the prime minister. I do not know why he has returned.”

The Second Ruler sent Fei Yi to Hanzhong to inquire why the army had withdrawn. And when Fei Yi delivered the Second Ruler’s question to Zhuge Liang, the latter was greatly surprised.

“Li Yan sent an urgent letter in which he said Wu was going to invade us, so I came back.”

Then Fei Yi related to Zhuge Liang what Li Yan had said to the Second Ruler. Zhuge Liang was furious to hear this and ordered someone to investigate the matter. Then it came out that Li Yan had failed to collect sufficient grain to keep the army supplied and, for fear of being held responsible by the prime minister, had sent the first false letter to the army that it might retreat before the shortage became apparent. His petition to the Second Ruler was intended to cover up his fault.

“The fool has ruined the great design of the state just to save his own skin.”

In his wrath Zhuge Liang wished to call in the offender and put him to death. But Fei Yi pleaded for the culprit, reminding the prime minister that Li Yan was among those whom the late Emperor had entrusted with the care of his son.

Zhuge Liang approved. Fei Yi then returned to the capital and reported the matter to the Second Ruler, who also flared up in rage and ordered Li Yan to be executed.

But this time Jiang Wan intervened. “Your late father named Li Yan as one of your guardians. I beg Your Majesty will show mercy.”

So Li Yan’s life was spared but he was stripped of all rank and exiled to Zitong.

Zhuge Liang went back to the capital, where he employed Li Yan’s son in his service. Preparations then began for an expedition to start in three years. Plans were discussed, provisions were accumulated, weapons put in order, and officers and men well cared for. By his kindness to all men Zhuge Liang won great popularity.

Time moved swiftly. All of a sudden, three years had passed. In the second month of the thirteenth year of Jian Xing, Zhuge Liang went to court and presented a memorial, which said: “I have been resting the army for three years. Now supplies are ample and military equipment all in order. Both men and horses are strong and sturdy. This is the moment to raise an expedition against Wei. If I cannot sweep away the evil hordes and recover the northern land this time, may I never set eyes on Your Majesty again!”

The Second Ruler replied: “The tripartite rule is a firmly established reality at present, and Wu and Wei do not trouble us at all. Why not enjoy the present peace, Father-Minister?”

“I have received such great kindness from your father that I am always thinking of a way to destroy Wei, even in my dreams. I must strive my best to restore the northern territory to Your Majesty and reestablish the rule of Han. This is my sole wish.”

As he said this an official stepped forth and objected, “No, the army must not be raised!”

It was Qiao Zhou who had spoken against the campaign.

Zhuge Liang’s sole thought was service, himself he would not spare;
But Qiao had watched the starry sky, and read misfortune there.

Qiao Zhou’s arguments will be disclosed in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Here “horse,” pronounced ma in Chinese, refers to Sima Yi; and “deer,” pronounced zhang, refers to Zhang He.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWO

Sima Yi Occupies the Wei Bridge over Beiyuan

Zhuge Liang Constructs Wooden Oxen and Running Horses

Qiao Zhou, who spoke against the expedition, was an official responsible for observing celestial bodies. Addressing the Second Ruler, he said, “I am bound by duty to report to Your Majesty whether there are auspices of fortune or misfortune. Not long ago, hundreds of thousands of orioles flew from the south and drowned themselves in the Han Waters. This is an evil omen. Moreover, I have been studying the aspect of the sky and found the movements of the stars point to an aura of prosperity in the north. To attack Wei will not be to our benefit. Thirdly, the people in the capital claim they hear the cypress trees moan at night. With these evil omens, I think the prime minister should not go to war, but remain at home to protect the regime.”

Zhuge Liang said, “The late Emperor laid upon me a heavy responsibility, and I must exert myself to the utmost to destroy these rebels. The policy of a state must not be changed because of some unsubstantiated signs of trouble.”

Undeterred, he ordered a great sacrifice to be offered at the Temple of Emperor Zhao Lie (Liu Bei). There, weeping, he prostrated himself and made this declaration: “I, Liang, have

made five expeditions to Qishan without gaining any expansion of territory and this fault weighs heavily upon me. Now once again I will lead the army to Qishan and I pledge to devote all my heart and might to the extermination of the rebels of Han and the restoration of the northern territory. To achieve this end I will exert myself to the last remnant of my strength and die content."

The sacrifice ended, he took leave of the Second Ruler and set out for Hanzhong to make the final arrangements for his military campaign. While so engaged, he received the unexpected news of the death of Guan Xing due to illnesses. He was so grieved that he cried himself faint. When he finally recovered consciousness his officers did their utmost to console him.

"How pitiful!" he lamented. "Why does Heaven deny long life to the loyal and good? I have lost a most able general just as I am setting out and need him most."

As all are born, so all must die;
Men are as gnats against the sky;
But loyalty or piety
May give them immortality.

The armies of Shu numbered 340,000 and they marched along in five divisions, with Jiang Wei and Wei Yan in the van. All the troops were to converge at Qishan. Li Gui, who was in charge of supplies, was ordered to convey grain and forage first into Ye Valley in readiness.

In Wei the reign title had earlier been changed to Blue Dragon, because such an animal had been seen to issue from a

well in Mopo. At the time it was the second year of the new reigning period.

News of Zhuge Liang's fresh expedition was duly reported to the ruler of Wei, who was distressed and at once called in Sima Yi for consultation.

Sima Yi replied, "The aspect of the sky is very favorable to us and unfavorable to Shu. But Zhuge Liang is attempting to pit his powers against Heaven. He is only asking for defeat and destruction for himself. And I, by virtue of Your Majesty's good fortune, will be the instrument of that destruction. But permit me to name four men to go with me."

"Who are they?" asked the Emperor.

"They are the four sons of Xiahou Yuan, Ba, Wei, Hui, and He. The two elders are trained archers and cavaliers, whereas the two younger ones are shrewd strategists. All four desire to avenge the death of their father. Ba and Wei can be leaders of the van—Hui and He military advisors. They will help me repulse our enemy."

"Remember the evil fate of employing the imperial son-in-law Xiahou Mou. He lost his army and is still too ashamed to return to court. You are sure these are not like him?"

"Not in the least."

The Emperor granted the request and named Sima Yi as commander-in-chief, with the authority to employ all officers

and mobilize all forces in the state. When Sima Yi took his leave he received a command in the Emperor's own writing:

When you reach the banks of the Wei River, you are to fortify your position well and not to give battle. The men of Shu, disappointed of their desire, will pretend to retreat and so to entice you out but you must be on your guard and not pursue. Wait till they have consumed their supplies and are compelled to retreat, when you may smite them. Thus you will not find it hard to obtain victory, nor will you exhaust the army unduly. This is the best plan.

Sima Yi took it with bowed head. Then he proceeded forthwith to Chang'an, where he mustered forces from various districts and gathered together 400,000 men, all of whom came to camp by the side of the Wei River. Fifty thousand were soon assigned to construct nine floating bridges farther up the stream. The two leaders of the van, Xiahou Ba and Xiahou Wei, were ordered to camp across the river and a rampart was built behind the main camp as a further precaution.

One day Sima Yi was discussing plans with his officers when Guo Huai and Sun Li came to see him at the new camp.

Guo Huai said, "With the men of Shu at Qishan there is the possibility of their crossing the Wei River to occupy the plain and pushing forth their lines to the northern hills so as to cut off our transit to Longxi. That will bring serious problems to us."

"You're quite right," said Sima Yi. "I want you to take command of all the Longxi forces. Go and camp at Beiyuan.

Dig a deep moat and build a strong rampart there. But be sure to adopt a defensive policy—wait till the enemy's food supplies are exhausted before you think of attacking."

The two took the order and left.

Zhuge Liang had again led his army to Qishan, where he set up five main camps in the five directions of left, right, center, front, and rear. Between Ye Valley and Sword Pass a line of fourteen large camps were also established to accommodate his men and horses, as a long campaign was intended. He appointed inspecting officers to make daily patrols to see that all was in readiness.

When he heard that the men of Wei had camped in Beiyuan, he said to his officers: "They camp there because they are afraid I may try to seize that place and thus sever their connection with Longxi. Now I will feign an attack on Beiyuan, but my real purpose is to seize the riverbanks. I will prepare over a hundred rafts piled high with straw and get 5,000 skilled sailors to manage them. The raid on Beiyuan will begin during the night, which will bring Sima Yi to its rescue. If he is but a little worsted our rear divisions are to cross the river while the leading divisions are to embark on the rafts, not for landing on shore, but for setting fire to the floating bridges and attacking the rear of the enemy. I myself will lead an army to capture their first camp. If we can gain the south bank of the river our advance will be easy."

Spies carried the information to Sima Yi, who addressed his officers: "Zhuge Liang has some crafty scheme behind all his maneuvers. He is only making a show of seizing Beiyuan. In fact some of his men are going downstream to burn our

bridges and throw our rear into confusion while others will attack our front."

So he ordered Xiahou Ba and his brother to lead their men to the southern hills, so that when they heard cries of battle in Beiyuan, they should attack the men of Shu as they emerged. Two other forces of 2,000 bowmen each were to lie in hiding on the north bank by the bridges. When they saw the Shu rafts coming down on the current they were to shoot at them to prevent them from nearing the bridges.

He also sent an order to Guo Huai and Sun Li: "Zhuge Liang is coming to Beiyuan to cross the river in secret. As you have only recently established your camp and your force is small, place all your men in ambush halfway along the road. If the enemy crosses the river in the afternoon, they will certainly attack you by evening. Just simulate defeat and run to induce them to pursue. Then shoot at them. We will attack them both on land and in water. If their main army comes, watch out for my orders and retaliate accordingly."

After that Sima Yi told his two sons, Shi and Zhao, to strengthen the defense of the front camp while he led his own men to relieve Beiyuan.

On the Shu side, Wei Yan and Ma Dai were ordered to cross the Wei River and attack Beiyuan, while the mission of setting fire to the bridges was given to Wu Ban and Wu Yi. The major attack on the Wei camp was to be launched by three divisions, involving six officers. The various forces started at noon and crossed the river, where they proceeded slowly in battle form.

When Wei Yan and Ma Dai neared Beiyuan dusk had already set in. Sun Li was alerted of their approach and he at once abandoned his camp and fled. It dawned on Wei Yan that his attack was expected, and he turned to retreat. At this moment a great shouting was heard, and there appeared Sima Yi and Guo Huai, bearing down upon them. Wei Yan and Ma Dai made desperate efforts and extricated themselves. But many of their men fell into the river while others scattered and did not know where to escape. Fortunately, Wu Yi came up and rescued the force while holding the enemy at bay.

Wu Ban set half his men to navigate the rafts down the river to burn the bridges, but from the shore the men of Wei shot clouds of arrows at them. One of the arrows struck Wu Ban, who fell into the river and was drowned. His men jumped into the water and got away but all the rafts were lost to the enemy.

At this time Wang Ping and Zhang Ni, ignorant of the defeat of their Beiyuan army, went straight for the camps of Wei and arrived there at the second watch. Surprised to hear loud shouting on all sides, Wang Ping said to his colleague, “I wonder if the operation in Beiyuan is successful or not. The enemy camp is just ahead but how come there isn’t a single Wei soldier? Could it be that Sima Yi has found out our plan and so is prepared? Let’s wait till we see the floating bridges on fire.”

So they halted. Soon after, a mounted messenger came up with Zhuge Liang’s order for them to hurry back as the attacks on Beiyuan and the bridges had both failed. Shocked to hear this they hastened to withdraw, but the men of Wei had already reached their rear through byroads. An explosion

pierced the air and they were at once attacked as flames rose high to the sky. A melee ensued, from which the two officers eventually got out, but only with heavy losses.

When Zhuge Liang collected his army together at Qishan he found, to his distress, that he had lost more than 10,000 of his men. Just at this time Fei Yi arrived from the capital. He was received by the prime minister, to whom he made his obeisance.

Zhuge Liang said, “I would like to trouble you, sir, to deliver a letter for me to Wu. Will you undertake the mission?”

“Certainly.”

So Zhuge Liang wrote a letter and sent Fei Yi to carry it to Sun Quan. Fei Yi hastened to the Wu capital to see Sun Quan and present the following letter:

Unfortunate indeed have been the Hans, whose line of rulers has been broken. The Caos have usurped the throne and continue to hold power. My late lord confided to me a great task, which I must exhaust all my efforts to accomplish. Now my army is at Qishan and the rebels are on the verge of destruction upon the Wei River. I hope Your Majesty, in accordance with our alliance, will send your generals on an expedition against Wei. Together we will conquer the north and share the empire. This letter leaves much unsaid, but I earnestly hope you will consider my request.

Sun Quan, much pleased with the letter, said to the envoy, “I have long desired to set my army in motion, but have not been able to arrange a joint campaign with Zhuge Liang. Now

that he has written me this letter, I myself will lead an expedition to Juchao and capture Xincheng of Wei. Moreover, I will send Lu Xun and Zhuge Jin to camp an army at Jiangxia and Miankou to take Xiangyang. I will also order Sun Shao and Zhang Cheng to seize the Huaiyang region via Guangling. The three armies, numbering 300,000 men, will start soon."

Fei Yi bowed in gratitude and said, "In that case the north will fall in no time."

A banquet was given in honor of the Shu envoy. During the feast Sun Quan asked, "Who does your prime minister employ to lead the battle?"

Fei replied, "Wei Yan is the chief officer."

"He is brave enough, but not trustworthy," said Sun Quan. "Once Zhuge Liang is no more, he will stir up trouble. Could it be that he does not know?"

"Your Majesty is perfectly right," said the envoy. "When I return I will lay your words before the prime minister."

Fei Yi took his leave and hastened to Qishan with the news of Wu's intended expedition.

"Did the ruler of Wu mention anything else?" asked Zhuge Liang.

Then Fei Yi told him what Sun Quan had said about Wei Yan.

“Truly a wise ruler,” said Zhuge Liang appreciatively. “But I’m not ignorant of this. I use him because he is very bold.”

“Then, sir, you ought to decide soon what to do with him.”

“I know what to do.”

Fei Yi left and returned to the capital.

One day Zhuge Liang was discussing his campaign plan when it was reported that a certain Wei officer had come to surrender. Zhuge Liang had the man brought in and questioned him.

“I am an officer in Wei and Zheng Wen is my name. Recently Qin Lang and I were transferred here to serve under Sima Yi. But contrary to my expectations, he showed great partiality for my colleague. He gave Qin Lang a high rank but treated me as if I were but a weed. The injustice cut deeply and so I come to submit to you, sir. Pray accept my service.”

At that moment it was reported that Qin Lang was outside challenging Zheng Wen to combat.

“How does this man stand with you in fighting skill?” asked Zhuge Liang.

“I will kill him,” said Zheng Wen.

“If you were to slay him, my doubts would be removed.”

Zheng Wen readily mounted his horse and rode out. Zhuge Liang himself went out to witness the fight. There was the

challenger shaking his spear and reviling the deserter, “You rebel! Give me back the horse you stole!”

And he galloped toward Zheng Wen, his spear ready to strike. Zheng Wen whipped up his horse and brandished his sword to engage him. In the first bout he cut Qin Lang down.

The Wei soldiers then ran away, while the victor hacked off the head of his victim and returned to the Shu camp. Zhuge Liang also came back to his tent and took his seat. Then he summoned Zheng Wen.

“Take him away and behead him!” shouted Zhuge Liang angrily when the man came.

“I have done nothing wrong,” cried Zheng Wen.

“As if I do not know Qin Lang! The man you killed just now was not Qin Lang. How dare you try to deceive me?”

Zheng Wen prostrated himself and said, “It was really his brother, Qing Ming.”

Zhuge Liang smiled. “Sima Yi sent you to feign submission for his own designs. But how could he hope to throw dust in my eyes? If you do not tell me the truth I will put you to death.”

Thus trapped, the false deserter had to confess everything and begged for life.

Zhuge Liang said, “If you want to live, write a letter to Sima Yi and ask him to raid our camp in person. And if I capture

Sima Yi, I will give you all the credit and reward you handsomely."

There being no alternative, the man agreed and the letter was written. Then the writer was placed in confinement.

One of the officers asked Zhuge Liang: "How did you know he was false, sir?"

"Sima Yi chooses his men carefully," replied Zhuge Liang. "If he made Qin Lang a leading general, the man must be of great military skill. But Zheng Wen's opponent was overcome in the first encounter, so he could not be Qin Lang. That's how I knew."

This explanation convinced all the officers, who bowed to him in admiration. Then Zhuge Liang selected a persuasive soldier and whispered certain instructions in his ear. The man at once left, carrying with him Zheng Wen's letter to the Wei camp, where he asked to see Sima Yi. He was admitted, and the letter was read.

"Who are you?" said Sima Yi.

"I am a native of the north, a poor fellow stranded in Shu. Zheng Wen and I are fellow villagers. Zhuge Liang has given him the position of a van leader as a reward for what he has done, and he sent me to deliver this letter to you. He said he would raise a fire tomorrow evening as a signal and asked you, Commander, to lead the whole army to raid the Shu camp. He would work from the inside to assist you."

Sima Yi took great pains to test the reliability of these statements, and he examined the letter minutely to see if it bore any signs of fabrication. As he could find nothing wrong he ordered in refreshments for the bearer of the letter. Then he said: "At the second watch tonight I will lead a force for the raid. If it succeeds I will give you a good appointment as a reward."

Taking leave, the soldier retraced his steps to his own camp and reported what was said to Zhuge Liang.

Before deploying his troops Zhuge Liang performed a ritual. Holding aloft his sword, he took the proper paces for an incantation, and prayed. This done, he summoned five of his officers, to whom he gave some secret instructions. When they had gone to carry these out, he ascended a high hill to direct the battle, taking with him a few score followers.

Sima Yi had been taken in by Zheng Wen's letter and intended to lead the night raid with his two sons. But his elder son expostulated with him.

"Father, you're going on a dangerous expedition on the faith of a mere scrap of paper. What if something goes unexpectedly wrong? Let some other officer go first, and you come up as a reserve."

Sima Yi saw there was reason in his words and decided to send Qin Lang, with 10,000 men, to raid the Shu camp, while he would command the reserve.

The night was fine at the first watch. There was a bright moon and a gentle breeze. But at about the second watch the sky

was suddenly over-cast with dark clouds and a black vapor hung in the air. It was so dark that one could not even see the face of the person opposite.

“Heaven is helping me to succeed,” said Sima Yi, delighted.

The army soon advanced swiftly and silently, men wearing gags, and horses with cords round their muzzles. Qin Lang and his force made straight into the camp of Shu. To his shock there was not a man inside, and he knew he had been tricked. He yelled to his men to retreat, but torches fired up all round, and attacks began from all four sides. Fight as he would, Qin Lang could not free himself.

From behind the battle area Sima Yi saw flames rising from the camp of Shu and heard continuous shouting, but he did not know whether it meant victory for his own men or for his enemy He urged his troops to press forward toward the fire. Suddenly, a shout rose and instantly sounds of war began to rock the air and shake the earth. In the midst of the uproar, Wei Yan and Jiang Wei dashed forth from the right and left to smite their enemy.

The men of Wei were utterly worsted. Of every ten men of Wei eight or nine were killed or wounded and the rest scattered to the four winds. The arrows came as thick as swarms of locusts and Qing Lang was killed. Qin Lang’s men were completely crushed. Sima Yi eventually collected his defeated army together and fled.

After the third watch the sky cleared. Zhuge Liang sounded the gong of retreat from the hilltop. The obscurity at the

second watch turned out to be Zhuge Liang's magic, so was the clarity of the sky at the third watch.

So the Shu army returned to camp triumphantly. Zhuge Liang ordered the false deserter of Wei to be put to death. Then he considered new plans for capturing the south bank. Day after day he sent his officers out to challenge the enemy to combat, without response.

One day Zhuge Liang rode out in his small chariot to carefully scan the lie of the land in front of Qishan and to the east and west of the Wei River. Presently he came to a valley shaped like a gourd, large enough to form a hiding place for a thousand soldiers in the inner recess. Then he found in between two hills another valley, which could hide half as many, but in the rear the hills were so close that they left a passage only for a single rider and his horse. Immensely pleased with the discovery, Zhuge Liang asked his guide what this place was called.

"It is called Shangfang Valley, or Gourd Valley," replied the guide.

Returning to his camp, he called up two officers named Du Rui and Hu Zhong and whispered into their ears certain secret orders. Next he sent a thousand artisans that had been with the army into the Gourd Valley to construct "wooden oxen and running horses" for the use of the troops. Finally he sent Ma Dai with five hundred soldiers to guard the mouth of the valley and prevent all movement in or out.

"I will come to inspect the work now and then," he added. "My plan to capture Sima Yi depends on the work here, so it must be kept a profound secret."

Ma Dai left to guard the Gourd Valley. Inside, the two officers, Du Rui and Hu Zhong, superintended the work of the artisans. Zhuge Liang came every day to give instructions.

One day Yang Yi went to see Zhuge Liang. "All our grain is at Sword Pass, and the labor of transport is very heavy. What can be done?"

Zhuge Liang replied, smiling: "I have been thinking about this for a long time. I have told the carpenters to construct 'wooden oxen and running horses' with the timber we have accumulated. These can be used very conveniently to convey grain as they require neither food nor water, and can travel day and night without resting."

All were amazed. "Since ancient times no one has ever heard of 'wooden oxen and running horses.' What excellent plan do you have, sir, to make such marvelous creatures?"

"These animals are now being made after the specifications I give them, but they are not yet ready. I will write down the method in full detail for you to see."

Zhuge Liang then wrote out the specifications for making a wooden ox and a running horse on a sheet of paper. All the officers bowed to the ground after reading, and lauded their prime minister for his super-human genius. A few days later the transport animals were complete. They looked like real animals and could move up and down a hill with alacrity. The

whole army was delighted to see them. Zhuge Liang ordered Gao Xiang, with a thousand soldiers, to drive the animals from Sword Pass to the main camp in Qishan, to transport grain for the use of the troops.

Along the Sword Pass mountain roads
The running horses bore their loads,
And through Ye Valley's narrow way
The wooden oxen paced each day.
Oh! if they were at hand today,
Transport troubles would melt away.

Sima Yi was already distressed at his defeat when he was told of these "wooden oxen and running horses" that the men of Shu were using to convey their grain. This troubled him still more. With this device his enemy might never be compelled to retreat for want of food. What was the point of him shutting his gates and remaining on the defensive, waiting for them to be starved, when they never would be starved?

He immediately summoned two officers. "I want you to lead five hundred men each and take some bypaths to Ye Valley to wait for the enemy. When the men driving the wooden animals have all passed, rush out all at once, seize only several of these animals and come back."

That night the two officers and their soldiers sneaked into Ye Valley and hid themselves there, disguised as men of Shu. Presently they saw their enemy leading the "wooden" convoy along. When nearly all of them had gone past they made a sudden rush, shouting and beating drums at the same time. The men of Shu were caught unprepared and abandoned

several of their transport animals. The northerners captured these gleefully and took them to their own camp.

When Sima Yi saw the wooden animals he was amazed to find that they could move forward or backward, just like live ones.

Overjoyed, he said, “If he can use this, so can I.”

Sima Yi called in more than a hundred clever artisans, who were told to take the machines to pieces in front of him and to construct their own transport animals exactly like Zhuge Liang’s models. In less than two weeks they had produced 2,000 such animals that could also move about. Then he placed Chen Wei, with a thousand men, in charge of this new means of transport, and the wooden animals, much to the delight of the officers and men, began to ply between the camp and Longxi, carrying grain and forage.

Meanwhile Gao Xiang returned to camp and reported the loss of five or six of his wooden “oxen and horses.”

“I wanted the enemy to capture some of them,” said Zhuge Liang, much pleased. “I have lost only a few wooden oxen and running horses, but before long I will get some very solid help in exchange.”

“How do you know, sir?” asked his officers.

“Once he sees them Sima Yi will certainly try to make his own, copying my models, and when he has done that I have another scheme ready to play on him.”

Some days later, Zhuge Liang received a report that the northerners had also constructed their own wooden animals and were using these to bring up supplies from Longxi.

"Just as I expected," said Zhuge Liang joyfully.

He called Wang Ping to him and said, "Take a thousand men and disguise yourselves as men of Wei. Move quickly and secretly past Beiyuan, pretending to be patrol men for the grain convoy, and go to their depot. Once there turn on the guards and scatter them all away. Then drive the wooden animals back past Beiyuan, where you will surely be pursued. When that occurs, turn the tongues of the animals, and they will not move. Leave them where they are and run away. When the men of Wei come up, they will be unable to drag the creatures along, nor will they be able to carry them. Later when you see another troop of ours come, turn back and give the tongues a backward twist and bring the convey here. The enemy will certainly find it supernatural."

Wang Ping departed to carry out the plan. Next Zhuge Liang called Zhang Ni and said, "Take five hundred men and dress them up as heavenly soldiers with heads of demons and bodies of wild beasts. Let them paint their faces in five colors and assume all kinds of grotesque facial expressions. Let each of them hold a flag in one hand and a sword in the other, and slung across his shoulder is a gourd with combustibles hidden inside. Hide these men among the hills till the grain convoy approaches. Then they are to kindle the flammable material inside the gourds, rush out all at once, driving the wooden animals along. The enemy will think you are supernatural and dare not pursue."

When he had left, Wei Yan and Jiang Wei were called.

"You two take 10,000 men and leave for the camp in Beiyuan to guard the wooden transport creatures in case there is fighting."

Then Zhang Yi and Liao Hua, commanding 5,000 men, were sent to check Sima Yi's route of retreat, and Ma Dai and Ma Zhong, with 2,000 men, were ordered to challenge the enemy on the south bank of the river.

The Wei officer Cen Wei was leading a convoy of wooden animals to transport grain from Longxi. On the way scouts suddenly reported some soldiers ahead, who declared that they were patrol men for the grain convoy. Cen Wei halted and sent his men to inquire. It appeared they were truly men of Wei and so he advanced without suspicion. The newcomers mingled with his own men.

But before they had gone much farther there was a yell, and the newcomers, who were men of Shu in disguise, began to kill, while shouting "General Wang Ping is here!" The Wei soldiers were taken aback and many were killed. Cen Wei rallied around him the remaining troops to resist but was slain by Wang Ping and the others ran away. Then Wang Ping led his men to drive the wooden animals to the Shu camp.

The Wei soldiers ran back to Beiyuan and reported the mishap to Guo Huai, who at once set out to rescue the convoy. When he approached, Wang Ping ordered his men to turn the tongues of the wooden animals and left them on the road. Then they fled, intermittently fighting with the pursuers.

Guo Huai made no attempt to pursue, but told his men to lead the wooden animals back. But he could not move them.

Guo Huai was greatly perplexed, not knowing what to do. Suddenly there arose the roll of drums all around, and out burst two parties of soldiers. These were Wei Yan and Jiang Wei's men, and when they appeared Wang Ping's men faced about and joined the attack as well. Pounded by the three forces, Guo Huai fled in utter defeat. Thereupon the tongues were turned back again and the wooden animals set in motion.

Seeing this, Guo Huai intended to pursue again but just at that moment he saw clouds of smoke curling up behind some hill and a body of unusual warriors burst out, each holding a flag and a sword and all grotesque to look at. They rushed at the "animals" and goaded them away.

"Truly these must be supernatural helpers," cried Guo Huai, quite frightened.

The soldiers were also terror-stricken and dared not pursue.

Hearing of the setback in Beiyuan, Sima Yi hastened to the rescue. Midway along the road, where the land was most precipitous, two forces burst out upon him with fierce yells and deafening bombs. Upon the leading banner he read: "Generals Zhang Yi and Liao Hua of Han."

Sima Yi was startled at this and his men ran away in panic.

Encountering the demonish troops he lost his grain,
Facing a surprise attack his life was in danger again.

Sima Yi’s fate will be revealed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THREE

Sima Yi Is Trapped in Gourd Valley

Zhuge Liang Invokes His Star on Wuzhang Plain

Sorely smitten by Zhang Yi and Liao Hua in the battle, Sima Yi fled toward a thick wood, alone and armed only with his spear.

Zhang Yi halted the rear division while Liao Hua pressed forward after the fugitive, whom he could see threading his way among the trees. Sima Yi was, indeed, soon in fear for his life, dodging from tree to tree as his pursuer neared. When he was close enough Liao Hua slashed at his enemy but the sword struck a tree, not the man, and before he could pull his sword out Sima Yi had escaped. When Liao Hua resumed the chase Sima Yi was nowhere to be seen. Presently Liao Hua noticed a golden helmet lying east of the thicket. He picked it up, hung it on his saddle, and followed that way.

But the crafty fugitive, having flung away his helmet thus to the east of the wood, had gone westward, so that Liao Hua was moving farther away from his prey. After some time of futile searching, Liao Hua fell in with Jiang Wei, and the two rode back to camp.

By then the wooden oxen and running horses had been driven into camp, and the grain collected amounted to more than 10,000 shi.

Liao Hua presented Sima Yi's helmet and received a reward of the highest merit. But Wei Yan was angry and he complained openly. Zhuge Liang, however, pretended not to hear anything.

Sima Yi returned to his own camp in distress. Bad news followed: a messenger from the capital brought the Emperor's edict, telling him of an invasion by three armies of Wu and the preparations to send forces against them, and enjoining him to adhere to a defensive policy. Sima Yi, having received the imperial order, strengthened his defenses and refused any battle with the army of Shu.

On hearing that Wu was invading his land from three directions, Cao Rui sent three armies to repulse the invaders: Liu Shao to protect Jiangxia, Tian Yu to guard Xiangyang, while he himself, with Man Chong, relieved Hefei with the main army.

Man Chong led the leading division to Chaohu Lake. Looking across to the eastern shore, he saw numerous battleships and an orderly display of a large number of flags and banners. He went to see his ruler and proposed a surprise attack without loss of time.

"The enemy must expect us to be fatigued after a long march and will not take the trouble to prepare any defense. We should attack tonight, and victory will be ours."

The Emperor liked his idea and he ordered Zhang Qiu, a valiant general, to take 5,000 men carrying flammable material to raid the enemy from the lake. Man Chong was to command an equal number of men to attack from the eastern bank.

At the second watch that night the two forces set out quietly and gradually approached the lake. On reaching the Wu naval camp unobserved, all of them burst upon it with a yell, and the men of Wu fled without even striking a blow. The men of Wei set fires going in every direction and thus destroyed numerous ships, large quantities of grain, and many weapons.

Zhuge Jin, who was in command, led his beaten men to Miankou, and the northerners returned to their camp much elated by their victory.

When news of the defeat came to Lu Xun he called together his officers and said, “I must write to the Emperor to abandon the siege of Xincheng, so that his force can be employed to cut off the retreat of the Wei army, while I attack in front. Harassed in the rear and front, they will easily be broken.”

All agreed that this was a good plan, and the petition was drafted. It was sent by the hand of a junior officer, who was told to convey it secretly to Sun Quan. But this messenger was captured at the ferry and taken before Cao Rui, who read the dispatch and then said with a sigh, “This Lu Xun of Wu is really very resourceful.”

The captive was put into prison, and Liu Shao was warned to guard against Sun Quan’s attack from the rear.

Now Zhuge Jin's defeated men were also suffering from illnesses due to the summer heat, and at length he was compelled to write to Lu Xun, petitioning to withdraw homeward. Having read this dispatch, Lu Xun said to the messenger, "Give my regards to the general and tell him that I know what to do."

The messenger returned with this reply to Zhuge Jin.

"What is the commander doing?" asked Zhuge Jin.

"I saw him urging the men to plant beans outside the camp, and he and his officers were amusing themselves with a shooting game at the entrance gate."

Startled, Zhuge Jin himself went to see Lu Xun in his camp and ask him how to repel Cao Rui's strong army.

Lu Xun replied, "My messenger to our Emperor was captured, and thus my plan was discovered. As the enemy will be prepared it is useless to fight, so we had better retreat. I have sent another memorial to the Emperor, suggesting that all our forces withdraw gradually."

"But what is the point of the delay? If you think it best to retreat, it had better be done quickly."

"My army must retreat slowly, or the enemy will come in pursuit, which will mean defeat and loss. Now you can prepare your ships to feign resistance, while I make a semblance of advancing toward Xiangyang to confuse our enemy. Under cover of these operations we will slowly and

steadily withdraw to the south, and the enemy will not dare to follow."

So Zhuge Jin returned to his own camp and began to fit out his ships for the planned voyage, while Lu Xun disciplined his army and started the march, letting it be widely known that he was heading for Xiangyang. The news of these movements were duly reported to the ruler of Wei, and when the officers heard it they wished to go out and fight.

However, the Emperor, fully aware of Lu Xun's talents, warned his officers, "Lu Xun is very crafty. Perhaps this is his plan to induce us out to fight. Do not risk a battle."

The officers obeyed, but a few days later scouts brought in news that the three armies of Wu had all withdrawn. The Emperor did not believe this and sent out more spies to investigate, who confirmed the previous report.

Sighing deeply, the Wei ruler said, "Lu Xun is no less a strategist than Sun Tzu and Wu Qi. The south is not to be conquered yet."

Therefore he ordered his officers to defend firmly the various crucial points while he himself led the main army back to Hefei, where he encamped to await possible changes in the situation.

Meanwhile Zhuge Liang was at Qishan, planning a long stay. He told his soldiers to mix with the local people of Wei and help with plowing the fields. He divided the land between his army and the residents, with the army taking one third of the total. Strict orders were issued against any encroachment on

the property of the farmers, and so the people and the soldiers lived together very amicably.

Sima Yi's elder son, Shi, went to see his father and said: "The men of Shu have snatched much grain from us, and now they are mingling with the people of Qishan and farming the land along the banks of the Wei River for a longterm deployment. This will be a calamity for us. Why not choose a time to fight a decisive battle with Zhuge Liang, Father?"

His father replied, "I have the Emperor's orders to act on the defensive and must not venture out imprudently."

While they were talking, it was reported that Wei Yan was challenging for battle outside, waving Sima Yi's helmet and abusing him. Greatly incensed by the insult the officers desired to accept the challenge, but their commander was immovable in his decision to remain on the defensive.

"A sage once said, 'Impatience over a small matter upsets a great design.' Our best plan is to stick to a firm defense."

So the challenge was ignored. After reviling his enemy for quite some time, Wei Yan went back.

Seeing that his enemy was not to be provoked into fighting, Zhuge Liang secretly ordered Ma Dai to build a strong fence and therein to excavate a deep pit to collect large quantities of inflammables. And on the surrounding hills he was told to put up sham straw sheds and bury mines both in and around these sheds. When these preparations were complete Ma Dai received another secret instruction to block the rear exit to Gourd Valley and lie in ambush there.

“If Sima Yi comes to pursue, let him enter the valley, and then ignite the mines and kindle the firewood,” added Zhuge Liang.

Then he arranged some secret signals with Ma Dai: in the daytime a seven-star banner was to be held high up at the mouth of the valley and during the night seven lamps were to be lit on a hill. Ma Dai received the instructions and left.

Wei Yan was the next one to be summoned, and Zhuge Liang said to him: “Take five hundred men and go to the Wei camp to challenge the enemy for battle. The important point is that you must entice Sima Yi out of his stronghold. When he comes out, do not try to beat him but feign a defeat. He will surely pursue—and you’re to head for the seven-star banner by day and the seven lamps by night. If you can lead him into the Gourd Valley, I have a plan to capture him.”

Wei Yan took the order and departed with his men. Soon Gao Xiang was summoned.

“Take the wooden oxen and running horses in groups of about one or two score, load them with grain, and lead them to and fro on the mountain paths. If you succeed in getting them seized by the enemy you will have rendered a good service.”

So Gao Xiang went away with the wooden animals to play his part in the scheme. Then Zhuge Liang sent away the remainder of the Qishan troops, seemingly to work in the fields, but actually to redeploy them in the coming battle. Before they left he said: “Unless Sima Yi comes in person, pretend defeat no matter who your opponent is. If he himself

is on the scene, then concentrate your attack on the south bank of the river to cut off his retreat.

Having completed the deployment, Zhuge Liang led his men to camp near the Gourd Valley.

At the Wei camp two of the Xiahou brothers went to speak to their commander. “The men of Shu have set up camps in various places and are engaged in farming everywhere in the countryside, intending to hold out for a long period of time. If they are not destroyed now, but are allowed to consolidate their position, they will be hard to dislodge.”

“This must be another of Zhuge Liang’s ruses,” said Sima Yi.

“Commander, you are so full of doubts and hesitations,” they said. “When do you suppose we can destroy the enemy? At least let us two brothers fight one life-and-death battle that we may show our gratitude to our country.”

“In that case, you may go in two divisions,” consented Sima Yi at last.

So the two brothers went away with 5,000 men each, while Sima Yi sat in his camp, awaiting the result of their fight.

As the two divisions were marching along they saw coming toward them a body of Shu men driving the wooden animals. They attacked at once, and the men of Shu fled in defeat. All the animals were captured by the men of Wei and sent to Sima Yi’s camp. On the following day they captured more than one hundred Shu soldiers, who were also sent back to the main camp.

Sima Yi had the prisoners brought before him and questioned them. They told him that Zhuge Liang had concluded that he would not fight and so had sent them to various places to plow the fields in preparation for a longterm campaign. They had been unwittingly captured.

Sima Yi set them all free and allowed them to return.

“Why spare them?” asked Xiahou He.

“What is the point of slaughtering some common soldiers? Let them go back and praise the kindliness of the Wei officers, and our enemy will have little desire to fight against us. That was the plan by which Lu Meng captured Jingzhou.”

Then he issued a general order that in future all captured Shu soldiers should be released. But those who had captured them would still be generously rewarded.

As has been said, Gao Xiang was instructed to keep up a show of driving the mechanical animals to transport grain to and from the Gourd Valley, and the two Xiahou brothers constantly harassed them. In half a month they had scored several consecutive victories, and Sima Yi was thrilled. One day, when the two brothers had again captured scores of Shu soldiers, he sent for them for questioning.

“Where is Zhuge Liang now?”

“The prime minister is no longer at Qishan. He has set a camp about ten li from the Gourd Valley. We are now daily transporting grain to the valley.”

After he had questioned them in every conceivable detail, he set the captives free. Calling together his officers, he said, "Zhuge Liang has left Qishan to camp near the Gourd Valley. Tomorrow you shall join forces to seize their main camp at Qishan. I will command the reserve."

The promise cheered them, and they went away to prepare.

"Father, why do you intend to attack the enemy's rear?" asked his elder son, Sima Shi.

"Qishan is their base, and they will certainly hasten to its rescue. Then I will make for the Gourd Valley and burn their supplies. Thus their front and rear will be disconnected and we can thoroughly smite them."

The son dutifully agreed with his father. Soon the army set out, with two officers in the rear, each leading 5,000 men.

From the top of a hill Zhuge Liang saw the Wei soldiers march along in lines of several thousand and noticed their enormous number. He guessed that their objective was the Qishan camp and sent secret orders to his officers that if Sima Yi led in person they were to go off and capture the Wei camp on the south bank of the River Wei.

In the meantime, the men of Wei were all heading for the Qishan camp. As they got near and rushed toward their target, they saw from all around the place Shu soldiers running and yelling as if hastening to its rescue. Seeing this, Sima Yi at once changed course and made for the Gourd Valley with his two sons and the center force.

At the entrance of the valley Wei Yan had been expecting him most anxiously. Suddenly he saw an enemy troop appear. Wei Yan galloped up and recognized Sima Yi as the leader.

"Sima Yi, stay!" he shouted. Brandishing his sword, Wei Yan went up to challenge and Sima Yi set his spear to engage him. The two warriors exchanged a few bouts, and then Wei Yan suddenly turned his steed and bolted, making directly for the seven-star banner; Sima Yi followed, the more readily as he saw Wei Yan had but a small force. The two sons of Sima Yi were told to support him, one on either hand.

Presently Wei Yan and his five hundred men all entered the valley. Sima Yi halted at the entrance and sent a few scouts to reconnoiter. They returned to say that there were no ambushing troops inside, but only straw sheds on the hills.

Sima Yi said, "This must be where they store their grain."

So saying he led his troops inside the valley. But when he had got well within, Sima Yi suddenly noticed that kindling wood was piled high in the straw huts, and as he saw no sign of Wei Yan he began to feel uneasy.

"If our enemy should seal the entrance of the valley, what is to be done?" he said to his sons.

Even as he spoke there arose a great shout, and from the hillsides were flung down many torches, and the entrance to the valley was soon blocked by flames. The Wei soldiers tried in vain to get away from the fire. Worse was still to come. All at once, fire-arrows came shooting down from the hilltops; mines exploded from beneath the earth; and firewood in the

straw sheds blazed and crackled, its flames reaching high up to the heavens.

Scared out of his wits, Sima Yi dismounted and, clasping his two sons in his arms, he wailed, “My sons, we three are doomed to die here!”

As they were weeping, suddenly a stormy wind sprang up and black clouds gathered across the sky. Then came a peal of thunder, and torrential rain began to pour down, swiftly extinguishing the fire throughout the valley. The mines no longer exploded and all the fiery contrivances ceased to work mischief.

Gratified, Sima Yi cried, “If we don’t break out now, what better chance can we expect?”

And he made a dash for the outlet with his followers. At this moment his reserve force also came up to his rescue and so he escaped from the valley. Ma Dai’s force was not strong enough to pursue, and so the two troops of Wei joined forces to return to their main camp south of the Wei River.

But there they found their camp in the possession of the enemy, while Guo Huai and Sun Li were on the floating bridges struggling with the men of Shu, who retreated as Sima Yi approached. The bridges were subsequently burned and the Wei army occupied the north bank of the river.

The Wei troops attacking the Qishan camp were greatly disturbed when they heard of the defeat of their commander and the loss of their camp on the southern shore. Hurriedly they began to retreat but their enemies converged to strike

with greater vigor, and so gained a great victory. The loss for the Wei army was extremely heavy, eight or nine out of every ten were wounded and the number of dead was too numerous to calculate. Those who escaped fled to the north of the river.

From his position at the top of a hill Zhuge Liang had watched with joy as Wei Yan duped Sima Yi into the trap he had so carefully prepared, and rejoiced at seeing the flames that instantly burst forth. He was certain that Sima Yi would die this time. But he was grievously disappointed when Heaven sent down torrents of rain that quenched the fire and upset his whole plan.

Soon after, scouts reported the escape of Sima Yi and his two sons. Zhuge Liang sighed: "Man proposes, God disposes. We cannot wrestle with Heaven."

Fierce fires roared in the mouth of the valley,
But who could know a sudden rain should fall?
Had Zhuge Liang's plan but succeeded,
How could the empire fall to the Jins?*

In his new camp on the north bank of the river Sima Yi issued an order that he would put to death any officer who proposed going out to battle. The final result of the late, ill-advised expedition had been the loss of their camp on the south bank of the river. Accordingly all the officers turned their attention to a firm defense.

One day Guo Huai went to see his commander and said, "These days Zhuge Liang has been carefully surveying the country. I think he is certainly selecting a new camp site."

“If Zhuge Liang moves out to Wugong and camps by the hills eastward, we will be in grave danger; but if he goes from the south bank of the river and halts in the west on the Wuzhang Plain, we need have no fears.”

He then sent scouts to find out the movements of their enemy. Presently the scouts returned to say that Zhuge Liang had chosen the plain.

“Indeed this is a great fortune for our Emperor!” said Sima Yi, clapping his hand to his forehead. Then he reiterated the order to remain strictly on the defensive.

“Things will change within the enemy ranks after some time,” concluded Sima Yi.

After settling into his new camp on the plain, Zhuge Liang continued his attempts to provoke a battle. Day after day, officers went to challenge the men of Wei, but they refused to be provoked.

At last Zhuge Liang packed a woman’s headpiece and a mourning dress of white silk in a box, which he sent with a letter to his rival. The Wei officers dared not conceal the matter and so they led the bearer of the box to their chief. Sima Yi opened the box and saw the headpiece and the mourning dress.

Then he opened the letter, which briefly ran as follows:

As a high-ranking general leading the northern troops, you seem but little disposed to display firmness and valor and enter into a decisive contest with me. Instead, you prefer to

hide in your earthen lair, where you are safe from the keen edge of the sword. Are you any different from a woman?* Therefore I send you a woman's headpiece and a dress of mourning white, and if you do not emerge to fight you should humbly accept these. However, if you are not entirely indifferent to shame, and still retain some vestige of the heart of a man, reply to my challenge and fight me on a fixed date.

Sima Yi, although inwardly raging, assumed a smile. "So he regards me as a woman," he said.

He accepted the gift and treated the messenger very well. Before he left, Sima Yi asked him about Zhuge Liang's eating and sleeping habits and about how hard he worked.

"The prime minister works very hard," said the messenger. "He rises early and retires to bed late. He attends personally to all cases requiring punishment of over a score of strokes. As for food, he does not eat more than a few sheng (pints) of grain daily."

"He eats little but works hard," remarked Sima Yi. "Can he last long?"

The messenger returned to his own side and reported to Zhuge Liang that Sima Yi had taken the whole thing in good humor and shown no sign of anger; that he only asked about the prime minister's hours of rest, eating habits, and workload, never saying a word about military matters.

The messenger continued, "After I answered his questions he said, 'He eats little but works hard. Can he last long?'"

“He knows me very well,” said Zhuge Liang pensively.

At this an official called Yang Yong ventured to remonstrate with his chief. “Sir, I notice that you check the books personally. I think that is needless labor for a prime minister to undertake. In every effective administrative body the superior and the subordinate ranks have clearly-defined and separate duties. In a household, for example, the male servants plow and the female cook. Thus no jobs fall short of being attended to, and all needs are supplied. The master of the house has ample leisure and peace. He can eat and sleep without any worries. But if he strives to attend personally to every matter, he only wears himself out, yet achieves nothing. Does it imply that the master is not as clever as his maids and hinds? Not in the least. Only he fails in his own part—that of playing the master. And, indeed, the ancients held this same opinion, for they said, ‘The three highest-ranking ministers sit and delineate their plans; the common officials go and carry them out.’ Of old, Bing Ji* was disturbed by the panting of an ox, but was indifferent to the corpses lying about the road. And Chen Ping was unfamiliar with the state revenue and declared that these were the concern of others.

“But sir, you personally look into every minor business, sweating all day long. How can you be not exhausted? Sima Yi’s words are perfectly correct.”

Zhuge Liang wept. “I’m not ignorant of this. But I shoulder this heavy responsibility laid upon me by the late Emperor, and I fear no one else will be so devoted as I am.”

All those who heard him wept. Thereafter Zhuge Liang felt disturbed in his mind, and the officers dared not execute military operations.

On the other side, the officers of Wei resented bitterly when they learned that their leader had accepted Zhuge Liang's insult without offering to fight. They went to their chief and said, "We are reputable officers of a great state—how can we put up with such an insult from these men of Shu? Pray let us fight them. See which of us is the rooster and which the hen!"

"It's not that I fear to go out, nor that I'm ready to bow to the insult," said Sima Yi. "But I have the Emperor's command to be on the defensive and must not disobey."

But the officers were not in the least appeased.

"Let me petition to the Emperor and obtain His Majesty's permission. What do you say to this?"

They consented to await the Emperor's reply. A messenger bore to the Wei ruler, then in Hefei, this memorial:

Incapable as I am, I have been entrusted with a heavy responsibility. Your Majesty has commanded me to defend my position and wait for the men of Shu to destroy themselves. But Zhuge Liang has now sent me a woman's headpiece and dress, and put me to great shame. Therefore I am writing to let it be known to Your Majesty that I will soon fight to the death against our enemy in order to show my gratitude to the court and to remove the shameful stigma that now rests upon my army. Words cannot express how much I am urged to this course.

The Emperor read it and turned questioningly to his courtiers. "Sima Yi has so far been firmly on the defensive. Why does he now petition for battle?"

Xin Pi answered, "Sima Yi has no desire to give battle. But his officers must be too outraged to bear Zhuge Liang's insult. So he wishes for an edict to pacify them."

The Emperor understood and sent Xin Pi with a jie (formal edict) to the Wei camp to make known that it was the Emperor's command not to fight. Sima Yi received the order with all respect, and the imperial messenger announced that any future reference to offering battle would be taken as disobedience to the Emperor's special command. The officers could not but obey.

Sima Yi secretly said to Xin Pi, "You have indeed read my heart!"

Then he told his men to spread the news that the ruler of Wei had dispatched an envoy with a jie to forbid them to combat. When the officers of Shu heard about it they went in to tell Zhuge Liang, who smiled and said, "This is only Sima Yi's method of pacifying his army."

"How do you know, sir?" asked Jiang Wei.

Zhuge Liang replied, "Sima Yi has never intended to fight. The reason why he petitioned to be allowed to give battle was to show his officers his militancy. It is well known that 'A general in the field may defy an Emperor's command.' Would any general ask permission to fight from a thousand li away? Sima Yi is only using the Emperor to appease his men, who

must be furious with the insult. Now he is spreading the story to slacken the fighting spirit of our men."

Just at this time Fei Yi came. Zhuge Liang called him in and asked him the reason for his coming. Then Fei Yi related to him in detail the depressing news of Wu's setbacks on the southern front and its subsequent withdrawal. Zhuge Liang listened to the end. Heaving a long sigh, he fell unconscious to the ground. The officers hurried to his rescue. After a long while he came to.

"I feel very dizzy," he said with a sigh. "The old illness has returned. I fear my end is near."

In spite of his illness Zhuge Liang went out of his tent that night to scan the stars. What he saw alarmed him very much. He returned and said to Jiang Wei, "My life may end at any moment."

"Why do you say so, sir?" asked Jiang Wei, startled.

"Just now I saw in the constellation of the Big Dipper that the guest star is doubly bright, whereas the host star is darkened and its supporting stars are also obscure. With such a heavenly aspect I know my fate."

"If the aspect is as malignant as you say, sir, why not pray in order to avert it?"

"I do know the way to pray for it," replied Zhuge Liang, "but I don't know the will of Heaven. However, arrange to have forty-nine armored men stand around my tent outside and let each be dressed in black and hold a black flag. Within my tent

I will pray to appeal to the Big Dipper. If my host-lamp remains alight for seven days, then my life will be prolonged for twelve years. If the light goes out, then I will certainly die. Keep all idlers away from the tent and let two errand boys bring me what is necessary."

Jiang Wei went to prepare everything as directed. It was then mid-autumn in the eighth month of the year. That night the Milky Way was bright, studded with jade-like stars. The air was perfectly calm.

The forty-nine men were assigned to guard the tent, while within Zhuge Liang prepared incense and offerings. On the floor of the tent he arranged seven big lamps, and, outside these, forty-nine smaller ones. In the midst of all these he placed the lamp of his own fate.

Then he prayed. "I, Liang, born into an age of trouble, would willingly spend my life among tress and waters. But grateful to my late Emperor who sought me thrice in my cottage and confided to me the care of his son, I dare not fail in my effort to destroy the traitors of the empire. But contrary to my expectations, my star is declining and my end is near. Humbly I appeal to Heaven above: Please graciously listen to my prayer and extend my lifespan, that I may repay my lord for his benevolence, save the people from their sufferings, and restore the empire to its former state and perpetuate the rule of Han. I would not have dared to make an improper appeal, but this is really the cry of an agonized heart."

This prayer ended, in the solitude of his tent he awaited the dawn.

The next day, ill as he was, he did not neglect his duties, and he spat blood continually. For the next few days he attended to military affairs during the day and prayed in his tent at night.

In the meantime Sima Yi remained on the defensive. One night as he sat gazing up at the sky and studying its aspect he was greatly pleased at what he saw.

Turning to Xiahou Ba, he said, "Zhuge Liang must be ill and will soon die. I see his star is losing position. Take a thousand men to reconnoiter the Wuzhang Plain. If the men of Shu are in confusion and refuse to come out to fight, then Zhuge Liang must be ill. I'm going to take this opportunity to strike hard."

Xiahou Ba left. It was then the sixth night of Zhuge Liang's prayers, and he was pleased to find the lamp of his fate still burning brightly. Presently Jiang Wei entered and watched as Zhuge Liang, his hair loose, his hand gripping a sword, ritually paced the steps to try to keep his star in place.

Suddenly a great shouting was heard outside. He was just going to send someone out to inquire when Wei Yan dashed in, crying, "The men of Wei are here!"

Alas! Wei Yan's hasty steps extinguished the Lamp of Fate![*]

Zhuge Liang threw down the sword and sighed. "Life and death are fore-ordained—no prayers can alter them."

Frightened, Wei Yan fell to the earth and pleaded guilty. Jiang Wei furiously drew his sword to slay the culprit.

Naught is under man's control,
Nor can he with fate contend.

Whether Jiang Wei would slay Wei Yan will be revealed in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Sima Yi's younger son, Sima Zhao, later overthrew Wei and established Jin Dynasty.

* Women in ancient China were expected to stay indoors and not venture out. As Sima Yi maintained his defense behind the city walls Zhuge Liang ridiculed him by comparing him to a woman.

* A West Han prime minister. Once he was out on a spring day and noticed a panting ox and some corpses lying by the roadside. He paid much attention to the panting ox but little to the dead people. When asked, he argued that the panting of an ox on a spring day might indicate an abnormality in the climate, which might affect the crops, and it was his business as a prime minister to be concerned about agriculture; whereas the corpses on the roadside should concern only the magistrate.

* The light in the lamp was extinguished by the draught of wind accompanying Wei Yan's hasty steps.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR

A Great Star Falls as Zhuge Liang Returns to Heaven

A Wooden Statue Frightens Sima Yi

At the end of the last chapter Jiang Wei drew his sword to slay Wei Yan. But Zhuge Liang checked him. “This is my fate, not his fault.”

So Jiang Wei put back his sword. Zhuge Liang vomited several mouthfuls of blood and sank wearily upon his couch. Then he said to Wei Yan, “Sima Yi reckons I’m ill, so he has sent these men to make sure. You go and fight them at once.”

Wei Yan left the tent and led out his troops to drive away the men of Wei, who fled as they saw him. He chased them for over twenty li before returning. Then Zhuge Liang sent him back to guard his own camp.

Presently Jiang Wei came to his bedside to inquire how he felt.

Zhuge Liang said, “My sole wish has been to exert my utmost to conquer the north and restore the rule of the Hans. But Heaven decrees it otherwise and now my end is very near. I have put down my lifelong study in twenty-four articles, totaling 104,112 words. There are passages on ‘The Eight

Musts,' 'The Seven Cautions,' 'The Six Worries,' and 'The Five Fears.' I have examined all my officers but can find no one fit to receive my writing, except you. You're the only person who can carry on my work. Don't make light of it."

He gave the treatise to Jiang Wei, who bowed and wept as he took it.

"I have also developed a bow that fires multiple bolts, which I have been unable to put to use. It can shoot ten bolts of eight inches long at every discharge. You can make this weapon according to the drawings I have prepared."

Jiang Wei received these with another bow.

Zhuge Liang continued, "There is no part of Shu that causes anxiety, save Yinping, which must be carefully guarded. Although the place is precipitous enough, it will cause a problem later."

Then Zhuge Liang sent for Ma Dai, to whom he gave certain whispered instructions, before adding, "You must follow my instructions after my death."

Soon after, Yang Yi entered the tent. He was called to the minister's bedside and given a silk bag containing a secret order. As Zhuge Liang gave it to him, he said, "After my death, Wei Yan will rebel. When that happens, you're to open this bag only at the moment of battle. Then there will be someone to slay him."

After he had made these arrangements, Zhuge Liang again fainted and did not revive till the evening. Then he set himself to compose a memorial to the Emperor.

On receiving this the Emperor was greatly alarmed and at once sent Li Fu to inquire after the dying minister and consult him on future policies. Li Fu traveled day and night to the army camp to see Zhuge Liang. He delivered the Emperor's inquiry after the prime minister's health and made his obeisance.

Zhuge Liang wept and said, "How sad I am to die now, leaving my task unfinished! I have failed to complete the great cause of my country and am guilty to the world. After my death you all must be loyal to the Emperor and devote yourselves to his service. The existing policies of the government are to be maintained and the men I have employed are not to be lightly discharged from office. My plans for further military campaigns have been confided to Jiang Wei, who will continue my cause in the service of the state. But my time is drawing near, and I will immediately send my testament to the Emperor."

Li Fu heard him out and hurriedly took his leave.

With great difficulty Zhuge Liang sat up and told his attendants to help him into his chariot. And thus he made a last round of all the camps. But the cold fall wind chilled him to the bone.

Heaving a deep sigh he said, "Never again shall I lead the army against the rebels! Oh, distant and azure Heaven, could anything be more sorrowful?"

After he returned to his tent his condition worsened. He called Yang Yi to his bedside, to whom he said, “Wang Ping, Liao Hua, Zhang Ni, Zhang Yi, and Wu Yi and others are all loyal and honest men, who have fought many battles and borne much hardship. They can be employed in any task. After my death let everything go on as before. Withdraw the army slowly and without haste. You’re well versed in tactics and I need say little. Jiang Wei is wise and brave. He can be entrusted with guarding the rear.”

Weeping, Yang Yi bowed to receive these orders. Then Zhuge Liang had writing materials brought in and, seated in bed, he wrote his testament to the Emperor. Here is the substance:

> “Life and death are a man’s common lot, and fate cannot be evaded. As death is at hand I desire to prove my loyalty to the end. I, your servant Liang, a man of little ability, was born into a difficult age, and it fell to my lot to guide military operations. I led the army on a northern expedition, but failed to achieve my aim. Now sickness has unexpectedly laid hold upon me and death is approaching. I will be unable to finish my task in the service of Your Majesty. My sorrow is inexpressible.
>
> “I wish that Your Majesty will always purify your heart and limit your desires; practice self-control and love your people; maintain a perfectly filial attitude toward your late father and spread your benevolence to all. Seek out the hermits and recluses that you may obtain the services of the wise and good; reject

the wicked and depraved that the moral standard of the country may be exalted.

"To my household in the capital belongs eight hundred mulberry trees and fifteen mu of land; thus there is ample provision for my family. As for myself, I have been in services away from the capital and my food and clothing have been supplied by the government. I have not contrived to make any additional income so that at my death my household will have no extra silks nor surplus money. Thus I will not have failed Your Majesty's trust in me."

Having composed this document, he turned again to Yang Yi and said: "When I am no more, do not observe open mourning. Make a large coffin and place my body in it. Put seven grains of rice in my mouth and a lamp at my feet. Everything should be quiet as usual in the army, and on no account are you to start a mourning wail. Thus my star will not fall, and my soul will also rise to help hold it in place. So long as my star remains in its place Sima Yi will be afraid and perplexed. Let the rearmost division retreat first, followed slowly by the other camps, one at a time. If Sima Yi pursues, array the army for battle. Turn back the banners and beat the drum. When he approaches, push out the chariot in which sits the wooden image of myself that I have had carved before. Let the officers stand by my statue on the two flanks as usual. That will frighten Sima Yi away."

Yang Yi carefully noted all these orders. That night Zhuge Liang told his attendants to help him outside the tent to gaze up at the Big Dipper.

“That’s my star,” he said, pointing to one with his sword. All the others looked up and found it to be a fading star that seemed about to fall from its place. Zhuge Liang pointed at it and quietly murmured a spell. After that he hastened back to his tent, where he again fainted.

When the anxiety caused by his coma was at its height the imperial messenger Li Fu came back. Seeing Zhuge Liang had fallen unconscious, unable to speak, he burst into tears. “I am too late! I have foiled important business of the state!”

However, presently Zhuge Liang regained consciousness. Opening his eyes to look at all those about him, he saw Li Fu standing near his bed.

“I know why you have returned,” said Zhuge Liang.

“I have the Emperor’s command to ask you, sir, who could succeed you,” replied Li Fu. “In my hurry just now I forgot to ask about that. So I have returned.”

“After I’m gone, Jiang Wan is the most suitable man to deal with state affairs.”

“And after Jiang Wan?”

“Fei Yi.”

“Who next after Fei Yi?”

No reply came, and when they stepped forward to look at him they saw that their great prime minister had left them forever.

Thus died Zhuge Liang, on the twenty-third day of the eighth month in the twelfth year of the period Jian Xing (A.D. 234), at the age of fifty-four.

The great poet Du Fu wrote this verse to mourn his death.

A bright star last night falling from the sky
This message gave: "The Master has died."
No commands were issued again from his tent,
But his fame stood out at the altar of success.
Three thousand disciples miss their patron so kind.
Ten thousand men were buried in his bosom in vain.
Serene is the wood's green shade on a sunlit morn
But no longer can one hear the Master's fine songs.

And another famous poet, Bai Ju-yi, also composed a poem:

Within the forest dim the Master lived obscure,
Till, thrice returning, there the Emperor his mentor met.
As when a fish the ocean gains, desire was filled
Wholly; the dragon freed could soar aloft at will.
As guardian of his lord's son, none more zealous was;
As minister, most loyally he wrought at court.
His war memorials still to us are left
And, reading them, the tears unconscious fall.

Now in earlier days an officer named Liao Li had a high opinion of his own abilities and thought himself fitted to be Zhuge Liang's second. Dissatisfied that his role was too idle, he showed discontent and constantly complained. Thereupon he was deprived of his office and exiled by Zhuge Liang. When he heard of the minister's death he shed tears and said, "Then I will never be able to return."

Li Yan also grieved deeply at the sad tidings, for he had always hoped that Zhuge Liang would restore him to office and so give him the opportunity of making up for his former faults. After Zhuge Liang had died, he thought there was no hope of his re-employment, and he soon died of illness.

Another famous poet, Yuan Wei-zhi, also wrote in praise of Zhuge Liang.

He fought disorder, helped his lord in danger;
Most zealously he cared for his master's son.
He surpassed Guan Zhong and Yue Yi in ability,
He excelled Sun Tzu and Wu Qi in strategy.
How solemn were his war memorials!
How majestic were his Eight-Gate Arrays!
A man of such wisdom and virtue
Has no peer at all times.

On the night of Zhuge Liang's death Heaven grieved, earth mourned, and the moon was dimmed. Quietly Zhuge Liang's soul returned to Heaven.

Following his late command, no one dared to wail. His body was placed in the coffin as he had wished, and three hundred of his most trusty officers and men were appointed to keep a vigil. Secret orders were given to Wei Yan to command the rearguard, and then, one by one, the camps were broken up and the army began its homeward march.

Sima Yi, who had been watching the sky, saw a large, red star with horny bright rays passing from the northeast to the southwest and dropping into the Shu camp. It dipped thrice

and rose again, betraying a slight rumble. Sima Yi exclaimed with pleasure, “Zhuge Liang is dead!”

At once he ordered pursuit with a strong force. But just as he passed the camp gates doubts filled his mind again and he gave up the plan.

“Zhuge Liang is a master of magic. Perhaps he’s feigning death to get me to take the field. We will fall victims to his guile if we pursue.”

So he halted. But he sent Xiahou Ba with some scouts to the Shu camps to reconnoiter.

One night as he lay asleep in his tent, Wei Yan dreamed of two horns growing out of his head. When he awoke he was much perplexed by this strange dream. The next day an official called Zhao Zhi came to see him, and Wei Yan said, “I’ve long known that you understand very well the Book of Changes. Last night I dreamed of two horns growing upon my head. What could be its portent?”

After meditating for quite a while his visitor replied, “It’s a very auspicious sign. There are horns on the head of the unicorn and the dragon. It foretells of transforming and soaring into the sky.”

Wei Yan, much pleased, thanked the interpreter of his dream and promised him gifts when his words proved true.

Zhao Zhi left and presently met Fei Yi, who asked him where he had been.

“From the camp of Wei Yan. He dreamed that he grew horns upon his head and asked me to explain it for him. It’s an inauspicious sign but I didn’t wish to annoy him so I gave him an auspicious interpretation.”

“How do you know it is inauspicious?”

“The word for ‘horn’ is composed of two parts, ‘knife’ above and ‘use’ below, and so the dream comes to mean a knife upon his head. It’s a terrible omen.”

“Please keep it to yourself,” warned Fei Yi.

Then Fei Yi went to the camp of Wei Yan, and when they were alone, he said: “The prime minister died last night at midnight. On his deathbed he said repeatedly that you, General, are to command the rearguard to keep Sima Yi at bay while the army steadily retreats. He also told us not to conduct open mourning for his death. You can march at once.”

“Who’s acting in place of the late prime minister?” asked Wei Yan.

“The chief command has been delegated to Yang Yi, but the secret plans of war have been entrusted to Jiang Wei. This instruction is issued by the order of Yang Yi.”

Wei Yan replied, “Though the prime minister is dead, I’m still here. Yang Yi is only an advisor. How can he be equal to such an important post? Let him conduct the coffin home while I lead the army against Sima Yi. I’m determined to

achieve success. It's wrong to abandon important business of the state because of the death of the prime minister alone."

"The prime minister's last order was to retreat for the time being, and his order must be obeyed."

"If he had listened to me we should now have been at Chang'an. I'm General of Front Army, General of Conquering the West, and Marquis of Nanzheng. I'm not going to act as rearguard for a mere advisor."

"It may be as you say, General, but you mustn't do anything rash to put us at the enemy's mercy. Let me go and talk Yang Yi to his senses, and persuade him to surrender to you the military authority he holds."

Wei Yan agreed, and the visitor hastened back to the main camp and told Yang Yi what had been said.

Yang Yi responded, "Before he died, the prime minister confided to me that Wei Yan would revolt. My purpose in sending him the military order was to sound him out, and now the prime minister's prediction is confirmed. I will direct Jiang Wei to command the rearguard."

Therefore Yang Yi, guarding the coffin containing the remains of Zhuge Liang, marched back in advance, while Jiang Wei was told to cover the retreat. Then the army gradually withdrew according to Zhuge Liang's dying command. Meanwhile, Wei Yan sat in his tent waiting for the return of Fei Yi, and was perplexed at the delay. Then he sent Ma Dai to find out the reason. Ma Dai returned and told him

that Jiang Wei was covering the retreat and that the majority of the front army had already gone into the valley.

Wei Yan was furious. “How dare he play with me, the pedantic block-head? But he shall die for this.” Then, turning to Ma Dai, he asked, “Will you assist me?”

Ma Dai replied, “I have long hated Yang Yi. Certainly I’m ready to help you attack him.”

Delighted, Wei Yan broke camp and marched southward.

Meanwhile, by the time Xiahou Ba reached the Shu camps, they were all empty. He hastened back with this news.

“Then he is really dead!” said Sima Yi, stamping his foot in distress. “Pursue at once!”

“Be cautious,” said Xiahou Ba. “Send another officer first.”

“No. I must go myself this time.”

So Sima Yi and his two sons hastened to the Shu base. Shouting and waving flags, they rushed into the camps, only to find them entirely deserted. Telling his sons to bring up the remaining force with all speed, Sima Yi plunged ahead in the wake of the retreating army. At the foot of a hill, he saw the men of Shu in the distance and pressed on still harder. Suddenly a bomb exploded from behind some hill. A great shout shook the earth, and the retreating army turned about, ready for battle. From the shade of the trees fluttered out the great banner of the central army, bearing the words in big

characters: “Prime Minister of Han, Marquis of Wuxiang, Zhuge Liang.”

Sima Yi was shocked, turning pale with fear. He fixed his gaze ahead and saw, coming from the center of the Shu army, some score of officers of rank escorting a small chariot, in which sat Zhuge Liang as he had always appeared, a feather fan in his hand.

“Then he is still alive!” gasped Sima Yi. “And I have rashly placed myself in his power.”

As he hurriedly pulled round his horse to flee, he heard Jiang Wei shouting, “Do not try to run away, you rebels! You have fallen into our prime minister’s trap!”

The Wei soldiers were so scared that they felt as if their very souls had flown away. Casting away their armor, helmets, spears, and tridents, they trampled each other down in their haste to escape. Many of them perished. Sima Yi galloped fifty li without pause. At last two of his officers came up with him, and stopped his flying steed by catching at the bridle. “Do not be alarmed, Commander,” they cried.

Sima Yi clapped his hand to his head, “Have I lost my head?”

“Do not fear, Commander. The soldiers of Shu are now far away.”

But he was still panting for breath and only regained composure after a long while. Looking at the two officers, he recognized them to be Xiahou Ba and Xiahou Hui.

The three found their way by some paths to their own camp, where scouts were sent out in all directions. In a few days some natives came and said: “When the Shu army retreated into the valley, their wailing shook the earth and white flags were hoisted up. Zhuge Liang is really dead. Jiang Wei was left to guard the retreat and his force consisted of only a thousand men. The figure in the chariot was but a wooden statue of the prime minister.”

“While he lived I could guess what he would do—dead, I was powerless,” sighed Sima Yi.

From this episode came the saying among the people of Shu: “A dead Zhuge Liang can scare off a live Sima Yi.” A poem was written about this:

In the depth of the night a big star fell from the sky;
But Sima fled for fear his rival was still alive
And even now the western men, mock with scornful smiles,
“Oh, is my head on my shoulders still?”

Assured that his great rival was no more, Sima Yi renewed the pursuit. But he never caught up with the Shu army. Before he embarked on the homeward journey he said to his officers, “Now that Zhuge Liang is dead, we can sleep in peace.”

On his way back he passed by places where Zhuge Liang had set his camps and was amazed at their most orderly arrangement.

“Truly a most wonderful genius!” sighed Sima Yi.

Then he led his army to Chang'an, where he sent his officers to guard various strategic points while he himself went on to Luoyang to visit the Emperor.

Meanwhile, Yang Yi and Jiang Wei arranged their men in good order and retreated slowly into the entrance to the wooden plank road built along high rock faces, when they changed into mourning garb, hoisted white banners, and gave vent to their anguish for their deceased prime minister. The soldiers struck their heads and stamped their feet while they wailed uncontrollably. Some even cried themselves to death.

But as the leading division entered upon the road they saw a great blaze in front, and, with a loud shout, a cohort came out barring the way. The officers, taken aback, at once sent the news to Yang Yi.

The regiments of Wei were nowhere near,
Then who could be these soldiers that appeared?

Whose army this was will be disclosed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE

Zhuge Liang Leaves a Plan in the Silk Bag

Cao Rui Obtains the Dew-Collecting Bronze Bowl

When he was informed of the trouble ahead, Yang Yi immediately sent someone to find out what force this was that stood in his way. The scout returned to say it was Wei Yan, who had burned the wooden plank road and barred the way.

Startled, Yang Yi said, “When he was alive, the prime minister foretold that this man would one day revolt, and today he’s indeed turned traitor! Now our road of retreat is cut. What’s to be done?”

Fei Yi said, “He must have first sent a false memorial to the Emperor, accusing us of rebelling, before destroying the wooden plank road in order to hold up our progress. Therefore, we must also send a memorial to the Emperor to relate the truth and then plan his destruction.”

Jiang Wei said, “I know a pathway here, called Chasan. It is precipitous and dangerous, but it can lead us round to the rear of the wooden plank road.”

So they prepared a memorial and then turned off to follow the narrow mountain path.

Away in the capital, the Second Ruler of Shu was deeply troubled. He lost his appetite and felt restless in everything he did. One night he dreamed that the Brocade Screen Hills that protected the capital were riven and dangerous. He woke up in alarm and sat up till morning, when he called in his officials to interpret his vision.

Qiao Zhou stood forth and said, "I saw a large red star with horny rays fall from the northeast to the southwest last night, which foretells a disastrous misfortune befalling the prime minister. Your Majesty's dream corresponds to that."

The Second Ruler's anxiety increased. Presently Li Fu returned and was summoned into his lord's presence at once.

Li Fu bowed his head and wept as he said, "The prime minister is no more."

Then he repeated word for word Zhuge Liang's dying message.

The Second Ruler, overcome with grief, wailed loudly. "Heaven smites me!" he cried and fell, collapsing on to his couch. The attendants helped him into an inner chamber, and when Empress Dowager Wu heard the sad tidings she also wept without ceasing. All the officials wept in distress, and all the common people wailed in agony.

The Second Ruler was deeply affected, and for several days could hold no court. At this time Wei Yan's memorial arrived, accusing Yang Yi of rebellion. The astounded courtiers went to their lord's chamber to report this—at the time Empress Dowager Wu was also present. Astounded, the

Second Ruler told a courtier to read it aloud. In brief, it ran like this:

I, Wei Yan, General–Conquering the West and Marquis of Nanzheng, submit this report with bowed head: Yang Yi has assumed command of the army and is in rebellion. He has made off with the coffin of the late prime minister and intends to bring the enemies into our land. As a precaution, I have burned the wooden plank road and posted my troop to hinder his progress.

The Second Ruler said, "Wei Yan is a valiant general and could easily have overcome Yang Yi—why then did he destroy the plank road?"

Empress Dowager Wu replied, "The late Emperor used to say that Zhuge Liang knew that treachery lurked in the heart of Wei Yan, and had often wished to put him to death. He only spared him because of his valor. We should not believe too readily his tale of Yang Yi's rebellion. Yang Yi is a scholar, and the late prime minister employed him as an advisor, which showed he must be a reliable person. If we act rashly on Wei Yan's words alone, Yang Yi would certainly go over to Wei. Nothing should be done without due consideration."

As they were discussing this matter, an urgent memorial came from Yang Yi. Opening it, they read:

I, Yang Yi, leader of the retreating army, with all humility and trepidation, present this memorial. In his last moments the late prime minister delegated to me the charge of all matters of importance. I have respected this charge and acted in accordance with his policies without daring to make any

changes. I ordered Wei Yan to command the rearguard with Jiang Wei as his second. But Wei Yen ignored the command of the late prime minister. He led his own army into Hanzhong, burned the wooden plank road, and tried to steal away the coffin of the late minister. He has staged a sudden rebellion. I send this memorial in haste.

The Empress Dowager listened to the end. Then, turning to the courtiers, she said, "What is your opinion now?"

Jiang Wan replied, "In my humble opinion, Yang Yi may be hasty and intolerant, but he has rendered good services in seeing to the army supplies and advising on military affairs. He has long been a trusted subordinate of the late prime minister, who entrusted to him the command of the army. Certainly he is no rebel. On the other hand, Wei Yan regards himself superior to everybody else because of his past merits. Yang Yi is the only one who has openly defied him, and hence Wei Yan hates him. When he saw Yang Yi placed in charge of the army he refused to accept his command. Therefore he burned the plank road to cut off Yang Yi's retreat, and at the same time sent a false report to slander him. I am ready to guarantee Yang Yi's fealty with the lives of my whole house, but I would not answer for Wei Yan."

Dong Yun followed, "Wei Yan has always been conceited about his merits. He is discontented and complains a lot. Only fear of the late prime minister prevented him from revolting. Now the minister has passed away and it is inevitable that he would seize the occasion to stir up trouble. As for Yang Yi, he is a man of superior ability, and his employment by the late minister is proof of his loyalty."

“If this is true and Wei Yan is really a rebel, what should be done?” asked the Second Ruler.

Jiang Wan replied, “The late prime minister always distrusted him and hence must have left some scheme with Yang Yi to get rid of him. Had it been otherwise Yang Yi would not have retreated into the valley. Your Majesty may rest assured that Wei Yan will fall into some trap.”

Soon afterwards, two more memorials, one from Wei Yan and the other from Yang Yi arrived, each accusing the other of rebelling. Still more memorials of the same nature followed. Then Fei Yi returned from the front. He was summoned into the presence of the Emperor, to whom he reported in detail Wei Yan’s revolt.

The situation being clear, the Emperor decided to send Dong Yun with authority to negotiate peace between the two with kind words. So Dong Yun left on this mission.

At this time, Wei Yan had camped at the South Valley and guarded its entrance with his troops. He thought his plan was succeeding well. It had not occurred to him that Yang Yi and Jiang Wei could get past him by some byroads. Meanwhile, Yang Yi, for fear that Hanzhong might be lost, sent his van leader, He Ping, to advance first with 3,000 men while he and Jiang Wei, guarding the coffin, followed with the main force.

When He Ping and his men got to the rear of Wei Yan’s position they announced their approach with rolling drums. Scouts quickly reported this to Wei Yan, who at once armed himself, took his sword, and rode out to confront He Ping.

When both sides were arrayed He Ping rode to the front and began to revile his opponent.

“Where is that rebel Wei Yan?” cried He Ping.

“You are an accomplice of that traitor Yang Yi,” cried Wei Yan. “How dare you abuse me?”

He Ping continued, “Our prime minister has just passed away, his body not even cold. How dare you rebel?”

Then pointing with his whip at the followers of Wei Yan, he cried, “And you soldiers are men of Shu. You all have fathers and mothers, wives and children, relatives and friends in the west. Were you ever treated unkindly by the prime minister that you should join a traitor and aid his wicked schemes? You ought to return home and wait for your rewards.”

Hearing this, the majority of Wei Yan’s men responded with a loud shout and scattered.

Wei Yan was now in a rage. He whirled up his sword and galloped straight at He Ping, who went to meet him with his spear ready. They fought several bouts, and then He Ping rode away, feigning defeat. Wei Yan followed, but He Ping’s men began to shoot, and Wei Yan had to halt his pursuit. As he turned back he saw many of his men fleeing. His anger rising again, he rode after them and cut some of them down, but this did not stop the others from deserting. The only group that held their ground was the three hundred commanded by Ma Dai.

“You support me whole-heartedly,” said Wei Yan. “I will surely remember you in the days of success.”

The two then went in pursuit of He Ping, who swiftly fled away.

Mustering his remaining men, Wei Yan said to Ma Dai, “What if we go over to Wei?”

“That’s very unwise, General,” replied Ma Dai. “Why should a real hero bend his knee to another, but not instead carve out his own fortune? General, you have both wisdom and valor. No man in the whole of Shu could hope to stand up to you. I pledge myself to go with you to seize Hanzhong first, and then to attack the west.”

Greatly pleased, Wei Yan marched with Ma Dai toward Nanzheng.* From the city wall Jiang Wei saw them approach swiftly, displaying their prowess. He at once ordered the drawbridge to be raised.

As they drew near, both Wei Yan and Ma Dai shouted, “Surrender!”

Jiang Wei took counsel with Yang Yi. “Wei Yan is brave and fierce and now he has Ma Dai to support him. In spite of the smallness of his following, it won’t be easy to beat him. What should we do?”

Yang Yi replied, “Just before his death the prime minister gave me a silk bag, which he said I was to open when meeting Wei Yan’s rebellious troops. It contains a plan to get rid of this rebel. It seems that now is the moment to open it.”

So he opened the bag and drew forth the note inside. On the cover he read, “To be opened when meeting Wei Yan on the battleground.”

Jiang Wei said, “Since the prime minister ordered you to open the bag at a specific moment, don’t read it now. Let me take the army out and form a battle array. Then you can come forth.”

Jiang Wei donned his armor, took his spear, and rode out with 3,000 men. They marched out of the city gates amid the beating of drums. The array completed, Jiang Wei took his place under the great standard and began to denounce Wei Yan.

“Rebel Wei Yan, the prime minister never ill-treated you—why have you turned traitor?”

Wei Yan reined up his horse, lowered his sword, and replied, “This is no concern of yours, Jiang Wei. Tell Yang Yi to come.”

Now Yang Yi, hiding in the shade of the standard, opened the bag and read Zhuge Liang’s instruction. Overjoyed with its content, he rode blithely to the front. Pointing at Wei Yan he said, smiling, “When the prime minister was alive he foresaw that you would rebel and told me to be on my guard. How right he was! Now if you are bold enough to shout on horseback three times, ‘Who dares to kill me?’ then you will be a real hero and I will yield to you the whole of Hanzhong.”

Wei Yan laughed. “Listen, you old fool! While Zhuge Liang lived I feared him somewhat. But now that he is dead, who

dares to defy me? I have no fear to shout thirty thousand times, let alone three times."

He raised his sword, held his bridle, and shouted, "Who dares to kill me?"

Before he'd finished speaking, from behind him someone shouted savagely, "I dare to kill you!" At the same moment the man brought down his sword and Wei Yan fell dead beneath his horse. All were stunned at this sudden turn of events. It was Ma Dai who had cut down Wei Yan!

Now before Zhuge Liang died, he had entrusted Ma Dai with a secret plan: he was to slay Wei Yan abruptly when he heard the latter shout these very words. Yang Yi knew what was going to happen after reading the note in the silk bag. So he followed the instructions and Wei Yan was killed.

A poem says:

Zhuge Liang foresaw the treason in Wei,
He'd turn traitor to Shu in latter days.
The plan in the bag no one could foresee.
But its success was shown before the steed.

So before Dong Yun had reached Nanzheng, Ma Dai had already slain Wei Yan and joined forces with Jiang Wei. Then Yang Yi dispatched a message to the Second Ruler to report what had happened. Consequently the Second Ruler issued an edict that as Wei Yan had paid the penalty for his crime he was to be properly buried in consideration of his former services.

Yang Yi and the others continued their journey and in due time arrived at the capital with the coffin of the late prime minister. The Second Ruler led out the whole court, all in mourning white, to meet them twenty li ahead of the capital. He lifted up his voice and cried for his deceased minister, and with him cried all the officials. Wailing, too, were the common folks from the hills and woods, of all ages and both sexes. The sound of their lament shook the earth.

By royal command the coffin was borne into the city to the prime minister's residence. His son, Zhuge Zhan, was in charge of the funeral.

When the Second Ruler returned to court, Yang Yi appeared before him in bonds and blamed himself for his faults. The Second Ruler ordered the courtiers to loosen his bonds and said, "Were it not for you carrying out the orders of the late prime minister, when would his coffin have reached home? And how could Wei Yan be destroyed? Thanks to you, everything important was secure."

Yang Yi was promoted to be Chief Advisor of the Center Army, and Ma Dai was rewarded with the rank that Wei Yan had forfeited.

Yang Yi presented Zhuge Liang's testament, which the Second Ruler read with bitter tears. Then he ordered that a suitable site be selected by diviners as the burying ground for the great minister of the state.

At this Fei Yi said to the Second Ruler, "When nearing his end the prime minister commanded that he should be buried

on Dingjun Hills, and there should be no brick walls around his tomb, nor any sacrifices offered to him."

This wish was respected, and they chose a propitious day in the tenth month for the interment. The Second Ruler himself led the funeral procession to the grave on Dingjun Hills. The posthumous title conferred upon Zhuge Liang was Lord of Zhong-wu (Loyal and Martial), and a temple was built in Mianyang, where sacrifices were offered at the four seasons.

The great poet Du Fu, who visited the shrine many centuries later, wrote the following poem:

Oh, where can I find the prime minister's shrine?
Outside the town, where cypress trees grow tall.
Beneath sunlit steps the green grass wears the verdure of spring;
Hid amongst leaves orioles sing in vain their beautiful songs.
Thrice his lord sought him for a plan to rule the land;
Two reigns he set his heart to build and defend.
But 'ere was completed all his plans conceived
He died; and heroes since for him have e'er grieved.

On his return to the capital, the Second Ruler was told that the kingdom of Wu had deployed a large army at the boundary of Baqiu and its intention was unknown.

Startled, the Second Ruler said, "The prime minister has just died yet Wu is already breaking its oath and pressing our borders. What can we do?"

Jiang Wan replied, "I suggest we send Wang Ping and Zhang Ni to camp at Yongan as a precautionary measure, and at the

same time dispatch an envoy to Wu to announce the death of the prime minister and find out their true intentions."

"The envoy must be good at persuasion," said the Second Ruler.

At this an official stepped from the ranks of courtiers and offered himself. He was Zong Yu, a native of Nanyang, holding two posts in the army. Much delighted, the Second Ruler appointed him envoy to Wu and told him to probe the real situation.

Zong Yu set out for the Wu capital, where he was taken before its ruler, Sun Quan. When he had made his obeisance the envoy noticed that all the attendants were dressed in mourning.

Assuming an angry countenance Sun Quan spoke sternly: "Our two states are now one house; why has your master increased the guard at Yongan?"

Zong Yu replied, "It seems to me circumstances have made it necessary for the west to increase the garrison at Yongan as much as for the east to have a force at Baqiu. Neither is worth questioning."

"As an envoy you seem no inferior to Deng Zhi," said the ruler of Wu, smiling. "When I heard that your Prime Minister Zhuge had gone to Heaven I wept daily and ordered all my officials to wear mourning. I feared that Wei might take advantage of the occasion to attack your country, so I increased the garrison at Baqiu, intending to help you in case of need."

The envoy bowed and thanked him.

“I would not go back upon the pledge between us,” promised Sun Quan.

The envoy said, “My master has sent me to inform Your Majesty of the recent death of our prime minister.”

To reassure the envoy, Sun Quan picked up a silver barbed arrow. Snapping it in two, he vowed, “If I betray my oath may my posterity perish!”

Then he also appointed an envoy to Shu, taking with him incense, silk, and other things to be offered as sacrifices at the tomb of the deceased minister. The two envoys took leave of the ruler of Wu and journeyed to the Shu capital, where they went to see the Second Ruler.

Zong Yu said, “The Emperor of Wu is grieved over the death of our prime minister and put his court into mourning. The increased garrison at Baqiu is intended to safeguard us from Wei, lest they exploit the occasion of a public sorrow to attack. And he has broke an arrow in two to pledge never to betray the alliance.”

Delighted, the Second Ruler rewarded Zong Yu and treated the envoy of Wu generously. Presently the envoy left for home.

In accordance with Zhuge Liang’s advice, Jiang Wan was promoted to the office of prime minister besides being given other important posts, while Fei Yi was appointed associate in the prime minister’s office. Wu Yi was promoted to a higher

rank, with the authority to govern in Hanzhong, and Jiang Wei was created a general with an honorable title and a marquis, commanding forces of various regions. He was sent to post his men in Hanzhong to join Wu Yi in guarding against attacks from Wei. The other officers retained their former positions.

But Yang Yi was forgotten. Discontented that he should be placed beneath Jiang Wan, who had not been in service as long, and thinking that his services had not been adequately rewarded, he spoke resentfully to Fei Yi: "At the time of the minister's death, if I had gone over to Wei with the whole army, I would not have been so desolate as this."

Fei Yi secretly reported this complaint to the Second Ruler, who was enraged and threw Yang Yi into prison. He intended to put him to death, but Jiang Wan reminded him of Yang Yi's many contributions while serving under the late prime minister and hence should not be executed, in spite of his fault. He proposed reducing Yang Yi to a commoner. The Second Ruler approved. So Yang Yi was stripped of his official posts and exiled to a remote area, where he committed suicide through shame.

The thirteenth year of Jian Xing of Shu (or the third year of Blue Dragon of Wei, or the fourth year of Jia He of Wu) witnessed no military campaigns among the three kingdoms.

Now in the kingdom of Wei, Sima Yi was given command of all the military forces and the responsibility to see to the security of border regions. He thanked his emperor and departed for Luoyang.

In the capital, Cao Rui began large-scale construction work to build himself new palaces. In Luoyang, too, he decided to erect three grand halls, each of a lofty height, and a group of buildings including a hall, a tower, a pavilion, and a pool. Over the construction of all these works he placed Ma Jun, an official of education and learning, as superintendent.

Nothing was spared that would contribute to the beauty of these buildings. There were carved beams, painted rafters, golden bricks, and green tiles, all glittering in the sunlight. Thirty thousand highly-skilled artisans in the country were sought, and more than 300,000 workmen were mobilized to labor day and night on these architectural works for the Emperor's glory and pleasure. The energy of the people was spent in this toil, and the cries of their complaint never ceased.

But the Emperor paid no attention. He issued another edict to build the Garden of Fragrant Forest, and all his officials were required to carry earth and transport trees into the garden.

Dong Xun, a minister, ventured to remonstrate with him. "Since the period of Jian An, wars have destroyed whole families and households. Those who survived are elderly and weak. Now if the palaces had been too small and enlargement desired, it would still be more fitting to choose a suitable time for the work so that it would not interfere with farming, let alone the construction of such unnecessary things. Your Majesty has honored your officials by allowing them to wear fine headdresses, dress in embroidered robes, and ride in decorated chariots, to distinguish them from the common people. Now these same officials are being made to carry timber and bear earth, to sweat and soil their feet. To destroy

the glory of the state in order to raise a useless edifice is indescribable folly. Confucius said, 'The Emperor treats his ministers with propriety, and the ministers reward him with loyalty.' Without loyalty, without propriety, can a state endure?

"I recognize that these words of mine mean death, but I am of no value, a mere bullock's hair, and my life is of no importance, as my passing would be no loss. I write with tears, bidding the world farewell. I have eight sons, who will be a burden to Your Majesty after my death. I cannot say with what trepidation I await my fate."

Cao Rui was greatly angered after reading the text. "Has the man no fear of death?"

His close courtiers advised the Emperor to put the bold speaker to death, but Cao Rui said, "He has always been loyal. I will reduce him to a commoner this time. But whoever dares to utter such nonsense again will be slain!"

And indeed there was another bold speaker whose name was Zhang Mao, in the service of the Heir Apparent. He also ventured to remonstrate but was executed at the order of the Emperor.

Cao Rui summoned Ma Jun and said, "I want to build high terraces and lofty towers with the intention of holding intercourse with the gods, so that I may obtain from them the elixir of life."

Ma Jun replied, "Of the four and twenty emperors of the line of Han, only Emperor Wu enjoyed the longest reign and life.

That was because he drank the essence of the sun and the splendor of the moon. He had built in his palace at Chang'an the Terrace of Cypress Beams, upon which stands the bronze figure of a man holding a Dew Collecting Bowl to get the vapor from the Big Dipper during the third watch of the night. The liquid thus obtained is called 'Celestial Elixir, or 'Sweet Dew.' Drinking the liquid after it is mixed with powdered jade restores youth to the aged."

Cao Rui, extremely pleased to hear this, ordered Ma Jun to leave for Chang'an immediately and bring back the bronze figure to set up in the new garden.

So Ma Jun took a multitude of men to Chang'an, where they built a scaffold to ascend the Cypress Beam Terrace. In no time, 5,000 men with ropes got up on the terrace, which rose two hundred feet high, and the bronze pedestal was ten cubits in circumference. Ma Jun told his men to detach the bronze statue first. Many laborers joined hands and brought it down. To their astonishment they saw tears rolling down the eyes of the statue.

Then suddenly a whirlwind sprang up beside the terrace and all at once dust and pebbles swirled thick as a shower of rain. Then with a tempestuous roar as of an earthquake, down collapsed the pedestal, and the terrace crumbled, crushing a huge number of men to death.

However, the bronze figure and the golden bowl were conveyed to Luoyang and presented to the Emperor.

"Where is the pedestal?" asked the Emperor.

“It weighs a million catties and is too heavy to transport,” replied Ma Jun.

Therefore the Emperor ordered it to be broken up and the metal brought to Luoyang. From this were cast two bronze figures, called Weng Zhong (named after a giant of a warrior in the Qin dynasty), which were placed outside the Sima Gate. A pair of dragons and phoenixes were also cast, the dragons forty feet (twelve meters) high and the birds thirty feet (nine meters). These were placed in front of the Hall of Audience. Moreover, the Emperor ordered his men to plant in the royal gardens wonderful flowers and rare trees and breed exotic birds and animals.

Yang Fu, another official, remonstrated with the Emperor on these extravagances.

“I have heard that the ancient king, Yao, lived in a humble thatched cottage, and a myriad nations enjoyed harmony; later King Yu contented himself with a simple abode, and all the empire rejoiced. In the days of Yin and Zhou dynasties, the hall of the ruler stood three feet above the ground and its area was nine mats. The sage emperors and wise kings of old had never despoiled the wealth and strength of the people to build beautiful palaces for themselves.

“Jie, last ruler of Xia Dynasty, built himself a jade chamber and elephant stables while Zhou, last king of Yin Dynasty, erected the Inclining Palace and the Deer Terrace. Both of these lost their empires. Later, Duke Ling of the Kingdom of Chu came to an evil end after building Zhang Hua Palace. The first Emperor of Qin constructed Epang Palace and

calamity fell upon his son, for the empire rebelled and his house was exterminated in the second reign.

“Alas! All those who have failed to consider the means of the people and given way to sensuous pleasures have perished. Your Majesty should take as your examples Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu on the one hand and regard Jie, Zhou, Chu, and Qin as lessons on the other. To seek only self-indulgence and think of nothing but decorating fine palaces will surely end in calamity.

“The Emperor is the head and his ministers are his limbs. Bound by the same fate, they live or die together. I am timorous, but dare I forget my duty? If I do not speak firmly, I should be unable to move Your Majesty. Now I have prepared my coffin and bathed my body, ready for the death penalty.”

But the Emperor was unmoved by this petition and only urged Ma Jun to carry on with the construction of the lofty terrace upon which to set up the bronze statue with the dew-collecting bowl. Moreover, he issued a command to select beautiful girls from across the country to inhabit his imperial gardens. Many officials remonstrated with him against this, but the Emperor ignored them all.

Now the consort of Cao Rui was of the Mao family. In earlier days, when he was a prince, he had loved her dearly, and when he succeeded to the throne she became Empress. Later he favored Lady Guo, and his consort was neglected. Lady Guo was beautiful and intelligent, and the Emperor was very fond of her. He neglected state affairs day after day for the

pleasure of her company, and for a whole month he did not even leave the living quarters of the palace.

It was then spring time, the third month of the year, and the flowers in the Garden of Fragrant Forest were in full bloom. The Emperor and his favorite lady went to the garden to enjoy the flowers and to drink wine.

“Why not invite the Empress?” asked Lady Guo.

“If she were present I couldn’t swallow a single drop of wine,” replied the Emperor.

He gave orders that his consort should be kept in ignorance of this merriment. But as a month had passed without the appearance of the Emperor, his consort and her ladies-in-waiting went to the Blue Flower Pavilion for some diversion. There, the joyous sound of musical instruments drifted into her ear, and she asked, “Where are they playing the music?”

To her question she was told that the Emperor and Lady Guo were drinking and enjoying the flowers on the imperial grounds. The Empress was quite annoyed to hear this and she went back to her chamber to try to get some peace. The next day, when she went out in her carriage, she came across the Emperor in the winding driveway.

“Your Majesty must have enjoyed himself immensely at the northern garden yesterday,” she said with a smile.

But the Emperor was enraged. He immediately sent for all the attendants at the garden the day before and put them all to

death for failing to observe his order. Shocked by this cruelty, the Empress turned her carriage to go back to her own chamber. But no sooner had she returned than there came an edict, condemning the Empress to death. Lady Guo was duly created empress in her place. And no officials in court dared to utter any disagreement.

Sometime later, the Governor of Youzhou sent in a dispatch to report the revolt of Gongsun Yuan of Liaodong, who had announced himself king of Yan and adopted the reign title of Shao Han. Furthermore, the rebel had built himself a palace, established his own court, and was disturbing the whole north with his marauding army.

Cao Rui was alarmed. A council was convened to discuss ways to put down the rebellion.

Within, endless building wearied the men of the north;
Without, the glint of weapons was seen on the border.

How the insurgents were dealt with will be related in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Another name for Hanzhong.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SIX

Defeated, Gongsun Yuan Dies at Xiangping

Pretending Illness, Sima Yi Sets a Trap for Cao Shang

The last chapter ended when the ruler of Wei was informed about the rebellion of Gongsun Yuan in Liaodong in the northeast. This Gong-sun Yuan belonged to a family long settled in that region. When Cao Cao was pursuing Yuan Shao's youngest son, who had fled there, it was Gongsun Yuan's father that had captured the fugitive, beheaded him, and sent his head to Cao Cao. For this service the father received the title of Marquis of Xiangping. After his death, as his two sons were then young, his brother inherited his title, and Cao Pi, in addition to confirming the marquisette, promoted him to a general of high rank. Later, Gongsun Yuan, the second son, grew up to be a young man well-versed in both the liberal and martial arts. Strong-willed and fond of fighting, he seized his uncle's power and claimed his father's heritage. Cao Rui gave him the title of a general and Prefect of Liaodong.

Then Sun Quan, anxious to secure his support, sent two envoys with gifts to see Gongsun Yuan and offered him the title of Prince of Yan. Fearing that Wei would resent any dallying with Wu, the prefect slew the envoys. For this proof of loyalty Cao Rui gave him an even higher military post and

created him Lord of Yuelang. However, he was still dissatisfied, and his thoughts turned toward independence. He took council with his officials and proposed to style himself "King of Yan" and to adopt a reign-title of his own.

One official, Jia Fan, opposed this. "The ruler of Wei has created you a lord, which is no little honor and it is not right to revolt against him," he argued. "Besides, Sima Yi is a brilliant military commander. You see, even Zhuge Liang could not defeat him—how much less can you?"

Gongsun Yuan was furious and wanted to condemn Jia Fan to death. At this moment another official, named Lun Zhi, offered further remonstrance.

"What Jia Fan said is right. A sage once pointed out, 'The fall of a state is preceded by the appearances of devilish beings. Now extraordinary things have been occuring frequently in our region. A dog was seen climbing up the roof of a house and walking like a human, wearing a turban and a red coat. Moreover, some people from a village south of the city were cooking rice when they found a child steamed to death in the pot. And at the market place north of the city the ground suddenly opened, revealing a large, fleshy mass, several feet wide, complete with a human head, face, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, but without limbs. Neither swords nor arrows could penetrate into it. No one knew what to call it, and after divination, a soothsayer said, 'A form that is incomplete and a mouth that does not speak: it emerges to foretell that a state is about to fall.' These three omens are all inauspicious. My lord, it is imperative that you make no rash moves at present so as to avoid dire trouble."

This second remonstrance enraged Gongsun Yuan still more, and he had both of them executed in the market place. Then he appointed Bei Yan as commander and Yang Zuo as leader of the van, commanding an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men to invade Wei.

Cao Rui was alarmed and summoned Sima Yi to court for counsel. However, Sima Yi did not seem to be greatly perturbed.

"My 40,000 infantry and cavalrymen will be enough to destroy them," said Sima Yi.

"But with your few men and the long march, it will not be easy to overcome them."

"The strength of an army does not lie in its number of men, but in strategy. Aided by Your Majesty's good fortune, I will certainly be able to capture this fellow and lay his head at your feet."

"What do you think will be his plan?" asked Cao Rui.

"His best plan would be to flee before our army can arrive; his second best, to defend his position across the whole of Liaodong; his worst plan, to try to hold Xiangping. In the last case, I will certainly capture him."

"How long will the expedition take?"

"We have to cover 4,000 li, which will take a hundred days. The war will consume another hundred and so will the return

journey, and then sixty days for rest. Roughly one year will be enough."

"What if Wu and Shu should attack?" asked Cao Rui.

"I have seen to that. Your Majesty need have no anxiety."

Reassured, Cao Rui ordered Sima Yi to undertake the expedition.

Sima Yi took his leave and left the capital. He appointed Hu Zun as his van leader, who led the front division and advanced to Liaodong, where he encamped. Scouts hastened to tell Gongsun Yuan, who sent his army to camp at Liaosui. There they fortified themselves, digging a moat twenty li in circumference and placing abatis, or felled trees, all round the rampart. Hu Zun, noticing these preparations, sent his men to tell Sima Yi.

"So they don't want to fight, but to weary my men," said Sima Yi with a smile. "I reckon most of his army is here, leaving his stronghold quite empty and undefended. I will abandon this place to make a dash at Xiangping. The enemy will definitely go to the city's rescue and I will smite them on the way. I should score a great victory."

So he hastened toward Xiangping along unfrequented ways.

Meanwhile, Gongsun Yuan's two officers were discussing their plans inside their fortifications.

Bei Yan said, "When the Wei army draws near, we will not fight. They come from thousands of li away and their supplies

will be short, so they can't hold out for long. When they run out of provisions they will have to retreat. Then we can stage a surprise attack and Sima Yi will be captured. That was the tactic Sima Yi used against Zhuge Liang on the Wei River, and Zhuge Liang eventually died before the end of the expedition. We will try the same tactic on Sima Yi himself."

As they were discussing their plan scouts came to report that the Wei army had marched southward. Bei Yan at once saw the danger and said, "They are going to attack Xiangping, which they know is undefended. If that city is lost it is pointless to hold this position." So they broke camp to follow the Wei army.

Sima Yi was immediately informed of his enemy's move and he rejoiced. "Now they will fall into the snare I have laid for them."

He sent Xiahou Ba and his brother with two forces to take up positions on the banks of the Liao River. They were to attack if the men of Liaodong came up. The two took the order and left for their destination. They had not long to wait. Soon, they saw Bei Yan and his army approaching and, following the explosion of a bomb, they attacked from two sides, beating drums, and waving their flags. The two Liaodong officers, who had no intention of entangling themselves in a long combat, made but a feeble resistance. They soon fled to the Shou Hills, where they were joined by their lord Gongsun Yuan. Then they turned back to fight the Wei army.

Bei Yan rode to the front and reviled the enemy. "Do not try to play tricks!" he shouted. "Do you dare to fight with me?"

Xiahou Ba rode out to accept the challenge, and after a few bouts Bei Yan was killed. Great confusion ensued among the men of Liaodong. At this Xiahou Ba urged on his men and drove Gongsun Yuan back to Xiang-ping. He took refuge in the city, which was immediately besieged by the men of Wei.

It was the time of incessant autumn rains. For thirty days it rained without ceasing. At the end of the month the ground was under three feet of water and the grain boats could sail straight from the Liao River to the city wall. The men of Wei, surrounded by water on all sides, could neither sit nor move.

The commanding officer of the left wing went to see Sima Yi. "The rain will not let up. The camps have become so muddy that they are not fit for the men to live in. Please move the camps to the hills."

But Sima Yi ignored the suggestion. "How can the army move away just when success is in sight? The rebels will be conquered any day now. Whoever dares to speak about drawing off again will be put to death!"

The officer departed submissively. Shortly after, his colleague in command of the right wing also came and repeated the same plea. He was put to death. His head was suspended at the camp gate as a warning to others. All were intimidated into submission.

Then Sima Yi ordered his men in the south camp to retreat twenty li, leaving this side of the city clear, so that the soldiers and people inside could come out to gather firewood and pasture their cattle and horses.

One of his officers asked, “Previously when you went to overcome Meng Da in Shangyong, you rushed to the city in eight days and stormed the walls from eight points. Very soon Meng Da was destroyed, and you won a great victory. Now your 40,000 men have traveled thousands of li and yet instead of pressing on with the attack, you leave your men in the mud and mire. You even allow the enemy to gather fuel and graze their animals. I do wonder what your intention could be.”

Sima Yi smiled. “Could it be that you’re ignorant of war strategies, sir? Formerly, Meng Da had ample supplies but few men, whereas we had little grain but many men, and so we had to make a speedy attack. Our success lay in taking the enemy by surprise with a sudden bombardment. But the present situation is quite different. The Liaodong men are many and we few; they are hungry and we are fully-fed. Why should we force the attack? Let them flee and we can smite them as they run. Therefore I leave a road free so that they may run away.”

His words convinced the officer of the soundness of the strategy. Shortly afterwards, Sima Yi sent a messenger to Luoyang to hasten the transportation of grain.

However, the war was not supported in the capital. At a court session many courtiers addressed their Emperor: “In Liaodong the rain has been continuous for a month, and the men are in misery. Your Majesty should recall Sima Yi and suspend the war.”

Cao Rui replied, “Sima Yi is an experienced commander. He has ready plans to deal with every eventuality. We do not

have to wait for long before Gongsun Yuan is captured. Why need you be so anxious?"

So he did not heed the voice of the opponents, but saw to it that provisions were sent to the front.

Several days later the rain ceased, and fine, clear weather followed. That night Sima Yi went out of his tent to study the sky. Suddenly he saw a big meteor, a bright streak of light of scores of feet long, fall from above the Shou Hills to the southeast of Xiangping. The officers and soldiers were rather frightened at this apparition, but their commander rejoiced.

"Five days from now Gongsun Yuan will be slain where that star fell," he predicted. "Tomorrow we will storm the city with vigor."

They surrounded the city at dawn the next morning. Every conceivable measure was taken to break the city's defenses. They built earthen mounds, dug tunnels, and set up catapults and scaling ladders to bombard the city day and night, without ceasing. Arrows fell like pelting rain.

Within the city, there was no grain and they had to slaughter bullocks and horses for food. All were resentful and none wished to defend the city. There was talk of slaying Gongsun Yuan and yielding the city. When he heard about this Gongsun Yuan was frightened, and decided to submit to Wei. He sent his prime minister and an envoy out of the city to ask Sima Yi to allow him to submit. These two had to be let down from the walls by ropes, as no other means of exit were possible. They found their way to Sima Yi's tent and said,

“Pray retire twenty li and allow our lord and his officers to come forth and surrender.”

“Why didn’t Gongsun Yuan himself come?” cried Sima Yi. “How very impertinent!”

He put the two envoys to death and sent their heads back into the city.

Extremely alarmed, Gongsun Yuan sent another official as his envoy to beg for submission. Sima Yi received this messenger sitting in state in his tent, with his officers standing on his two sides. The envoy inched his way forward on his knees, and when he reached the door of the tent he begged, “Pray cease your thunderous wrath. My master will send his son as hostage and then he and all his officers shall appear before you bound with cords.”

Sima Yi replied, “There are five possible options for any army. If you can fight, fight; if you cannot fight, defend; if you cannot defend, flee; if you cannot flee, surrender; if you cannot surrender, then die! These five options are open to you. What is the use of a hostage? Now get out and tell your master.”

The envoy put his hands over his head and fled like a rat. He went into the city and repeated what Sima Yi had said.

The Gongsuns, father and son, resolved to flee. They chose a thousand mounted men, and in the dead of night opened the south gate and got out. They took the road to the southeast and rejoiced to find it clear.

All seemed well for a distance of about ten li. Then a bomb exploded, which was followed by a roll of drums and the blare of trumpets—a force blocked their way. The leader was Sima Yi, supported by his two sons.

“Stop, rebels!” they cried.

In panic, Gongsun Yuan turned to look for a way of escape, but he was already surrounded on all sides by Hu Zun and four other Wei officers. As escape was impossible, Gongsun Yuan and his son dismounted and surrendered.

While still seated on his horse, Sima Yi turned to his officers and reminded them of what he’d said five days earlier about slaying Gongsun Yuan on the spot. They all praised him for his superhuman foresight. Then he ordered the father and son to be slain where they stood.

Next Sima Yi led his men to seize the city of Xiangping, but before he had reached the walls Hu Zun had already entered the place. The residents burned incense and bowed to welcome the victors as they marched into the city. Sima Yi sat in the official hall, where he executed the whole of the Gongsun clan, as well as all those who had assisted him in his rebellion. Altogether more than seventy were beheaded. A proclamation was duly issued to pacify the people. Someone told Sima Yi that Jia Fan and Lun Zhi had been opposed to the revolt and had therefore suffered death, so he honored their tombs and conferred ranks upon their children. The contents of the treasury were distributed among the soldiers as rewards, then the army marched back to Luoyang.

One night the ruler of Wei was suddenly awakened by a chill blast that extinguished the lights, and in the darkness he made out the forms of the late Empress Mao and scores of palace maids, who were moving toward his bed, all weeping and demanding that he give them back their lives. The fright he suffered led to an illness that worsened from day to day. So he ordered two palace officials, Liu Fang and Sun Zi, to take over all business of the privy council, and he summoned his brother Cao Yu, Prince of Yan, to the capital to be Grand General and regent for the Heir Apparent. However, his brother, being modest and retiring by nature, declined these high offices and responsibilities.

Cao Rui called in Liu Fang and Sun Zi and asked, "Who in the Cao clan is suitable for the post?"

As they had both received much favor from Cao Zhen, the late commander of the armed forces, they replied that none was so fit as his son Cao Shuang. The Emperor approved of their choice. Then they advised him to send his brother, Prince of Yan, to his own estate, if Cao Shuang was to be appointed.

Cao Rui consented and issued an edict, which these two brought to the prince, saying, "This edict in the Emperor's own hand bids Your Highness return to your own domain at once—and you are not to return to court without a special permission."

The prince wept as he left for home. Thereupon Cao Shuang was created Grand General, with full control of the government.

But Cao Rui's illness deteriorated rapidly, and he dispatched an envoy to summon Sima Yi to the palace. As soon as he arrived he was led to his lord's chamber.

"I feared lest I should not see you again," said Cao Rui. "Now I can die content."

Sima Yi bowed and said, "On my way I was told that Your Majesty was not feeling well. I grieved that I did not have wings to hasten here. But I am fortunate enough to see Your Majesty."

Then the heir was summoned to his father's bedside and so were Cao Shuang, Liu Fang, Sun Zi, and certain others.

Taking Sima Yi by the hand, the dying ruler said: "On his deathbed at Baidi, Liu Bei confided his son to the care of Zhuge Liang, whose devotion only ceased with death. If such loyalty can be found in the state of a remote area, how much more may I hope for it in a great country like ours! My son is only eight years of age, and incapable of ruling a kingdom. I hope you all will do your utmost to support him. Do not fail the trust I put in you."

Turning to the young prince, he continued, "Zhong-da (Sima Yi) is as myself, and you are to treat him with the same respect and deference."

The Emperor bade Sima Yi lead the young prince to his bedside. The boy threw his arms around his new guardian's neck and clung tightly to him.

“Never forget the affection he has shown you today,” said Cao Rui, weeping.

Weeping, too, Sima Yi bowed to the ground.

The Emperor was dying. He had lost his speech, but his hand still pointed to his son. Shortly after he died. He had reigned for thirteen years and died at the age of thirty-six. It was then the first month of the third year of the period Jing Chu in Wei (A.D. 239).

Sima Yi and Cao Shuang lost no time in placing the new Emperor, Cao Fang, on the throne. The new ruler was the late Emperor’s son only by adoption. He had been brought up secretly in the palace, and no one knew his real origin.

The posthumous title of “Emperor Ming” was conferred upon the late ruler, and he was buried in the Gaoping Tombs. Empress Guo was given the title of Empress Dowager. And a new reign title, Zheng Shi, was adopted. Sima Yi and Cao Shuang were in charge of the government. Cao Shuang treated his colleague with deference and acted in all important matters only after consulting him first.

Cao Shuang had frequented the imperial palaces since childhood and the late ruler had been fond of him for his discretion. Cao Shuang had a host of five hundred followers, among whom were five men known for their foppery. Their names were He Yan, Deng Yang, Li Sheng, Ding Mi, and Bi Gui. Besides these five there was another named Huan Fan, an intelligent man who was minister of agriculture, who was nicknamed “Bag of Wisdom.” These six were Cao Shuang’s most trusted companions.

One day He Yan said to his patron, “My lord, you should not let your great power slip into the hands of another or there may be trouble.”

Cao Shuang replied, “The late Emperor left his son in the care of both Sima Yi and myself. How can I betray his trust?”

He Yan said, “When your father and Sima Yi were fighting against Shu in the west, your father suffered much humiliation from him, which ultimately led to his death. How can you not be aware of that?”

His words suddenly awakened Cao Shuang. He then entered into an intrigue with the majority of the court officials, and one day he presented to the young Emperor a petition proposing that Sima Yi be promoted to the rank of Tai-fu* for his great merits and services.

The promotion was made, and consequently all the military power fell into the hands of Cao Shuang, who appointed his three brothers to high military posts, each commanding 3,000 Imperial Guards, with the privilege to go in and out of the palace at will. Moreover, all five of his confidants received powerful offices. These five and their patron were close associates in all concerns of state. From then on, Cao Shuang gathered about him larger and still larger numbers of supporters, whereas Sima Yi lived in seclusion, excused by illness. His two sons also resigned from office and stayed idle at home.

Cao Shuang now gave himself up to dissipation, spending his days in drinking and pleasure-seeking with his close followers. In dress and household vessels he copied the palace

patterns. Every time tribute of jewels and other luxuries arrived from various regions, he picked out the best for himself before sending them to the palace, and his courts and chambers were filled with beautiful damsels. The eunuch Zhang Dang, to curry favor with Cao Shuang, secretly selected several of the late Emperor's waiting maids and sent them to the new man in power. Cao Shuang also chose dozens of girls from good families that were skilled in music and dancing to play for him in his quarters. He also employed several hundred skilled craftsmen to construct tall buildings and beautifully-painted pavilions and to make vessels of gold and silver.

Now, He Yan had heard of Guan Lu's great skill in divination (see Chapter Sixty-Nine) and invited him to his place to discuss the Book of Changes. During the discussion Deng Yang, who was also present, said to Guan Lu, "You call yourself an expert in interpreting the Book of Changes, but your speech does not use the language of the book. How is that?"

Guan Lu replied, "He who knows the Book of Changes does not speak in its language."

Smiling, He Yan praised him: "An apt remark expressed with brevity. But cast a lot for me and tell me, can I one day hold one of the three highest offices in court? Besides, I have dreamed repeatedly of many black flies settling on my nose. What could this portent?"

Guan Lu replied, "In ancient times Yuan and Kai* aided Shun, and Duke Zhou assisted his nephew, the young king of Zhou. All of them were kindly and modest ministers who

enjoyed great fortune. You, sir, have come to high honors and wield a great power, but there are few who esteem you and many who fear you. This is not the way to cautiously pursue good fortune.

"Now one's nose is like an eminence. If an eminence stands firmly aloft it means a long-lasting fortune. But your nose is surrounded by black flies, which usually gather around foul objects. He who sits in a high position may tumble down. Should you not be wary of that? I wish you would listen to good advice to make up for your shortcomings. Then, indeed, may you reach the highest offices, and the black flies will disperse."

"This is a mere platitude of an old man," cried Deng Yang angrily.

"An old man can see those who are going to perish and 'platitude' may indicate what is not said," retorted Guan Lu, who then left with a flick of his sleeves.

His hosts laughed. "What a maniac he is!"

Guan Lu returned home and told his uncle about the whole thing. His uncle was alarmed at the probable consequences and said, "Why did you offend them? These two are very powerful men."

"What is there to fear? I was talking to two dead men."

"What do you mean?"

"Deng Yang's gait is that of one whose sinews are not attached to his bones, and his muscles, not in control of his flesh. When he stands he leans as a man without limbs. This is the look of an agitated ghost. As for He Yan, his soul has quitted its habitation; his blood does not lend color to his complexion; and his spirit is mere vapor. He looks like rotten wood. This is the look of a ghost in seclusion. Both will certainly die a violent death soon, and there is no need to fear."

"You are mad, completely mad!" his uncle cursed him and left.

Cao Shuang was devoted to the chase and often went out hunting with his five followers. His younger brother Cao Xi tried to warn him. "Brother, you're in an exalted position and yet you're constantly out hunting. Should anyone take advantage of this to conspire against you it would be too late to regret."

Cao Shuang reproached him harshly: "The army is in my hands—what is there to fear?"

Huan Fan, the minister of agriculture, also reasoned with him, but he would not listen.

About this time the title of the reign period was changed to Jia Ping (A.D. 249). Cao Fang, the young ruler of Wei, had been on the throne for ten years. (He was then eighteen years of age.)

During these ten years Cao Shuang had enjoyed absolute power, but he had little knowledge about the condition of the

man he had maneuvered from power. At this time Li Sheng, one of his five close followers, was appointed Governor of Jingzhou. Cao Shuang told him to go and take leave of Sima Yi, and at the same time to find out about the true state of his rival's health. So Li Sheng proceeded to Sima Yi's residence.

When his arrival was announced, Sima Yi said to his two sons: "Cao Shuang has sent him to find out how ill I really am."

He took off his headdress to let his hair hang loose about his shoulders, climbed into bed and sat there, all bundled up in his bedding, being propped up by two maids. Only then did he tell his servants to show the visitor in.

Li Sheng came up to his bed and bowed. "It has been a long time since I last saw you, sir, and I did not know you were so seriously ill. His Majesty is sending me to Jingzhou, and I have come to bid you farewell."

"Bingzhou is in the north—be very careful," said Sima Yi, feigning that he had not heard clearly.

"I am going as governor of Jingzhou, not Bingzhou," explained Li Sheng.

"Oh, you have just returned from Bingzhou?" said Sima Yi with a smile.

"Jingzhou, on the Han River."

"So you are just back from Jingzhou, eh?" said Sima Yi, laughing.

“How can he be so ill?” said Li Sheng to the servants.

They told him that their master was quite deaf.

“Give me paper and a writing brush,” said Li Sheng.

These were presently brought to him, and the visitor wrote down what he wished to say and handed it to Sima Yi.

Sima Yi smiled as he read it. “This illness has made me very deaf. Take care of yourself when you go there.”

After he’d finished speaking, he pointed to his mouth. One of the maids brought some broth and held the cup for him to drink. He put his lips to the cup, but spilled the broth all over the front of his dress.

Then he feigned a sob or two and said, “I am old and ill and may die at any moment. My two sons are good-for-nothing. I do hope you will instruct them. When you see the Grand General, pray ask him to look after my sons.”

At this point he fell back on the bed, panting for breath, and Li Sheng bowed and took his leave. Then he went back to tell his patron what he had seen.

Cao Shuang was overjoyed. “If that old man dies, I have nothing to worry about.”

But no sooner had Li Sheng gone than Sima Yi rose from his bed and said to his sons, “Li Sheng will give a full account of this to Cao Shuang, who will no longer guard against me. We

will wait till he goes on his next hunting trip, then we will take action."

Soon after this, Cao Shuang proposed to the Emperor that he should pay a visit to the tomb of his father and offer sacrifices in person. The Emperor approved. So the whole court went in the train of the imperial chariot. Cao Shuang, with his three brothers and his close followers, commanded the Imperial Guards to escort the procession. Huan Fan again warned him that he should not leave the city with all his brothers and his guards.

"If there should be trouble inside the city, what then?" he added.

Cao Shuang pointed with his horsewhip and rebuked him: "Stop talking nonsense! Who would dare to make trouble?"

On hearing that his rival had left the city, Sima Yi rejoiced greatly in his heart. He at once mustered the former officers that had fought battles under his command and gathered together dozens of his household guards. With his two sons, he led this force to kill Cao Shuang.

Now terminates his forced inaction,
He must destroy the hostile faction.

Cao Shuang's fate will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* An honorary post without real power.

* “Yuan” refers to eight gifted scholars of the house of Gaoxin, and “Kai” to another eight of the house of Gaoding, all of whom were in the service of the legendary king Shun.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN

Sima Yi Recovers Political Power

Jiang Wei Loses a Battle at Ox Head Hills

Sima Yi was very pleased to hear that his rival, together with his whole party and the Imperial Guard, had accompanied the young ruler on a visit to the late Emperor's tomb combined with a hunt. He at once went to the palace, ordered Gao Rou to assume provisional command of the army, and sent him to seize Cao Shuang's camp. Another official named Wang Guan was ordered to take control of the palace guard and occupy Cao Xi's camp. Having secured his position thus, Sima Yi and his supporters went to the palace of the Empress Dowager.

Sima Yi said, "Cao Shuang has betrayed the trust placed in him by the late Emperor and has ruined the government. He must be punished for his crime."

She was aghast. "But His Majesty is away. What can we do?"

"I have a memorial to His Majesty and plans for Cao Shuang's destruction," replied Sima Yi. "Do not worry, Your Majesty."

Intimidated, the Empress Dowager could only give consent. So two of Sima Yi's supporters were ordered to draft a memorial, which was to be sent to the Emperor by a eunuch. Then Sima Yi led his men to seize the arsenal.

Soon, news of the coup came to the knowledge of the family of Cao Shuang, whose wife hastened to the front hall and summoned the leader of the residence's guards, Pan Ju, to inquire.

"Our lord is away. What does Sima Yi mean by raising an army?" she asked.

"Do not be alarmed, Your Ladyship," he replied. "Let me find out."

Taking a dozen archers with him, Pan Ju went up the wall tower to survey. At that moment Sima Yi was passing their residence, and Pan Ju told his men to shoot. Sima Yi was unable to proceed. Behind Sima Yi an officer shouted to Pan Ju, "Do not shoot! His Excellency has important state affairs to attend to."

Thrice he urged him not to shoot, and so Pan Ju desisted. Sima Yi went across, guarded by his son Zhao. Then he went out of the city and camped on the Luo River at the floating bridge.

At the outbreak of the coup one of Cao Shuang's officers, Lu Zhi by name, went to seek advice from Xin Chang, a military advisor.

"Sima Yi has revolted," he said. "What should we do?"

“Let’s lead our forces out of the city to see the Emperor,” replied Xin Chang.

Lu Zhi agreed and left. Xin Chang hastened into the inner quarters to get ready to leave. There he met his sister, who asked him why he was in haste.

“His Majesty is out on a hunting trip and Sima Yi has closed the gates of the city. He must be plotting a rebellion.”

“I don’t think he is going to rebel, but only intends to slay General Cao,” she replied.

“I wonder how all this will end,” said her brother in surprise.

“Cao Shuang is no match for his rival and will surely be defeated.”

“Lu Zhi asked me to join him. Should I go with him?” asked Xin Chang.

His sister replied, “It is the moral obligation of a man to pursue the duties of his office. We show our sympathy, even to strangers in difficulties. To be in someone’s service yet desert him in times of danger will only bring calamity to oneself.”

This speech decided Xin Chang, who went with Lu Zhi. Taking several dozen cavalrymen they forced the gate open and got out of the city. When their escape was reported to Sima Yi, he thought that Huan Fan might try to follow their example, so he sent for him. However, on the advice of his

son, Huan Fan did not answer the summons, but decided to flee. He mounted and rode hastily to the southern gate.

But the gate was barred. The warden happened to be one of his former subordinates. Huan Fan pulled out from his sleeve a piece of bamboo* and said, "Here's Her Majesty the Empress Dowager's command. Open the gate for me."

"Let me look at it," said the warden.

"What! How dare you, an old servant of mine, distrust my words?"

The warden had to let him pass. As soon as he had got outside he shouted to the warden, "Sima Yi has revolted, and you had better come with me."

The warden realized that he had been tricked, but it was too late to chase him.

"So the 'Bag of Wisdom' has got away too! What can we do?" said Sima Yi in alarm, when he heard about Huan Fan's escape.

Jiang Ji consoled him. "An inferior horse thinks only of the fodder in the manger.* Cao Shuang will definitely not listen to him."

Then Sima Yi summoned Xu Yun and Chen Tai, to whom he said: "You two go and tell Cao Shuang that I have no other intention than to take away the military power from him and his brothers."

As soon as they had left, he told Jiang Ji to compose a letter which he ordered Yin Da-mu to take to Cao Shuang. “You are on good terms with Cao Shuang and hence are the fittest person for this mission. Tell him that Jiang Ji and I have sworn by the Luo River that we are concerned solely with his military power and nothing else.”

So Yin Da-mu also went away to take the message to Cao Shuang.

Out in the country, Cao Shuang was enjoying the hunting, flying his falcons, and coursing with his hounds. Suddenly there came the news of the coup in the city and the memorial sent by Sima Yi. He almost fell out of the saddle, so alarmed he was. Then a eunuch brought forth the memorial and knelt before the Emperor to present it. Cao Shuang took the memorial and opened it. An attendant was ordered to read it aloud:

> On my return from the expedition to Liaodong the late Emperor summoned Your Majesty, Prince of Qin and myself and certain others to his bedside, took me by the arm and impressed upon us all our duty for the future of the dynasty. Now Cao Shuang has betrayed the trust placed in him and upset the laws of the government. He usurps power at court and seeks dominance over others. He has appointed the eunuch Zhang Dang as supervisor of the palaces to spy upon Your Majesty, and awaits his chance to seize the empire. He has sown dissension among members of the royal family, causing them to injure their own flesh and blood. Turmoil infests the whole land, while fear resides in every man’s heart. All this

is opposed to the late Emperor's edict to Your Majesty and his commands upon me.

Feeble and old as I am, I dare not forget his words. My comrades, Jiang Ji and Sima Fu, agree with me that Cao Shuang is disloyal at heart and that military power should not be entrusted to his brothers. I have petitioned Her Majesty the Empress Dowager, who authorized me to act accordingly.

Therefore, on behalf of Your Majesty and Her Majesty I declare that all military power be taken from Cao Shuang, Cao Xi, and Cao Xun, who are to retain only their title of lords. They must return to their residence at once and not linger outside the city to hold up Your Majesty. If there be any delay, they shall be dealt with by military law.

As a precautionary measure, I have swiftly camped my army at the Floating Bridge by the Luo River. With all deference I present this memorial to bring the matter to the attention of Your Majesty.

When the minister finished reading, the Emperor turned to Cao Shuang and asked, "In view of his memorial, what are you going to do?"

Cao Shuang was scared out of his wits. Turning to his younger brothers, he asked, "What are we to do?"

Cao Xi replied, "I had warned you before, brother, but you were obstinate and would not listen to me, so it has come to this. Sima Yi is cunning beyond measure. Even Zhuge Liang

could not get the better of him. How could we hope to do so? We'd better submit to him so that we may save our lives."

Just at this moment Xin Chang and Lu Zhi arrived. Cao Shuang asked them about the situation inside the city.

They replied, "The city is closed as tightly as an iron barrel and Sima Yi is camped on the river at the Floating Bridge, and you cannot return. You must decide on your plan at once."

Then Huan Fan galloped up and said, "Sima Yi has rebelled. General, why not request His Majesty to proceed to Xudu and summon provincial troops to come and deal with Sima Yi?"

Cao Shuang replied, "How can we go to another place when all our families are in the city?"

"In times of danger even an ordinary man endeavors to keep himself alive! Now you have the Son of Heaven with you here, and if you summon the forces of the country, who dares to disobey you? How can you throw away your life?"

Cao Shuang only wept, unable to make a decision.

Huan Fan continued, "It is but a day's journey from here to Xudu, and there are enough supplies for several years in that city. Your forces in other camps are just close by. They will hasten here at your call. I have brought with me the seal of Commander of the Armed Forces. You must act at once, my lord! Delay means death."

“Do not press me,” said Cao Shuang. “Let me think it over carefully.”

Then Sima Yi’s two messengers came. They said to Cao Shuang, “Sima Yi desires only to take away your military power and nothing else. Please return to the city soon.”

Cao Shuang kept silent. Soon Yin Da-mu arrived with Jiang Ji’s letter. He assured Cao Shuang that Sima Yi had sworn by the Luo River that he had no other intention. He urged Cao Shuang to give up his military power and return to his residence soon.

Cao Shuang was disposed to believe in these words, but Huan Fan again warned, “It is urgent. Do not listen to the voices of these men or you will die.”

Night found Cao Shuang still vacillating. Sword in hand he sighed and sank deep in thought. He wept from evening to dawn but he was still undecided.

Huan Fan went to his tent again and exhorted him to decide upon some course. “You have had a whole day and a whole night for reflection. How come you have not yet made up your mind?”

“I will not fight,” sighed Cao Shuang, throwing down his sword. “I am willing to resign my office and content to be just a rich man.”

Huan Fan burst into tears as he left the tent. “Cao Zhen used to boast of his wisdom and resourcefulness, but his three sons are as stupid as pigs!” He wept copiously.

The two messengers pressed Cao Shuang to yield his seal of office to Sima Yi, and he did as he was told. Its custodian clung to the seal and would not give it up, crying, “Alas! my lord, you resign your power and humiliate yourself by surrendering. It is unlikely you will escape a public death.”

“Sima Yi will surely keep faith with me,” said Cao Shuang.

The army, seeing that he no longer had the seal of office, dispersed. Only a few officials remained at Cao Shuang’s side. On arriving at the Floating Bridge, Cao Shuang and his two brothers were ordered to go to their dwellings, while their supporters were imprisoned to await the Emperor’s command. When the Cao brothers entered the city, they had no attendants to accompany them. As Huan Fan approached the bridge, Sima Yi, from horseback, pointed his whip at him and asked: “Minister Huan, why did you act like this?” Huan Fan made no reply, but with head bent went into the city.

Then Sima Yi requested the Emperor to break camp and return to the city. The three Cao brothers were confined in their residence, the gate being fastened with a huge padlock, and the house besieged by eight hundred local inhabitants. Anxiety seized Cao Shuang’s heart.

Cao Xi said to his brother, “We have but little food left. You can write to Sima Yi, brother, to borrow some grain from him. If he is willing to lend us grain, then he surely does not intend harm.”

Cao Shuang followed his advice, and the letter was written and sent. After reading the letter Sima Yi had a hundred bushels of grain sent to him. Delighted, Cao Shuang said, “He

really has no intention to harm me!" And he no longer worried about his fate.

In fact Sima Yi had arrested the eunuch Zhang Dang and interrogated him. The eunuch confessed that he was not the only one who had plotted to subvert the government, and he named the five confidants of Cao Shuang. So they were arrested, and when interrogated, confessed that a revolt had been arranged for the third month. All were thrown into prison, wearing long wooden collars about their necks. Then the gate warden testified that Huan Fan had escaped out of the city, pretending to possess a command from the Empress Dowager, and accused Sima Yi of revolting.

Sima Yi said, "When a man falsely maligns another for revolting, the punishment for such a crime falls upon his own head."

So Huan Fan was also thrown into prison.

Then the three Cao brothers, and all those connected with them, were publicly put to death in the market place. Three generations of their clan were exterminated and their property confiscated and put into public holding.

Now there was a certain woman of the Xiahou family who had been wife to a second cousin of Cao Shuang's. She was left a childless widow early on in life and her father wished her to marry again. She refused and cut off one ear as a pledge of her marriage vow. However, when Cao Shuang and his clan were all put to death her father arranged another marriage for her—whereupon she cut off her nose. Her own people were shocked at her obstinacy.

They said, “Man’s life is like the light dust dwelling upon the slender blade of grass, and what is the good of putting yourself to such pain? Now that your husband’s family have all been slain by Sima Yi, what is the point of keeping your vow?”

The woman replied, weeping: “The honorable remain loyal to their lords in prosperity or in hardship; and the virtuous are true to their loved ones in life or in death. While the House of Cao enjoyed prosperity I remained faithful; how much more should I be true now that it has fallen upon hard times? To betray my vow would be the behavior of a beast. I will never succumb to that!”

The story of her devotion came to the ears of Sima Yi, who respected her for her chastity and allowed her to adopt a son to rear and so to continue the Cao family.

A poem says:

What is a man to be mindful of?
A grain of dust on a blade of grass;
Such virtue as Xiahou’s daughter had
Stands out sublime as the ages pass.
This fair young wife of gentle mien
Dared all to maintain her purpose high.
What man, though strong in the flush of life
Has equaled her in constancy?

After Cao Shuang had been executed, Jiang Ji recalled that three others of his party were still alive: Lu Zhi, Xin Chang, and the man that had opposed the surrender of the seal.

However, Sima Yi said, “They are righteous man who served their master faithfully.” He even restored them to their former offices.

Xin Chang sighed, “Had I not sought advice from my sister I would not have been a man of loyalty.”

A poet has praised his sister’s conduct.

You call him lord and take his pay,
Then stand by him when danger nears
Thus to her brother spoke the lady,
And won fair fame though endless years.

Soon Sima Yi issued a proclamation, granting general amnesty to all of Cao Shuang’s former employees, and those who had held official posts were restored to their original positions. So both the army and people kept to their own businesses and peace was restored throughout the country.

However, it is to be noted that He Yan and Deng Yang met their end just as Guan Lu had foretold, for which he was praised in a poem:

The seer Guan Lu was deeply read
In all the lore of the ancient sages.
Thus he could see events to come
As clear as those of former ages.
And he perceived the soul of He,
Already in the vale of gloom,
And knew the outer shell of Deng
Was hastening to an early tomb.

After recovering power, the ruler of Wei created Sima Yi prime minister and bestowed on him the Nine Gifts. Sima Yi refused these honors, but the Emperor insisted and would take no rejection. His two sons were made assistants to their father, and so all state affairs fell under the control of these three.

One day Sima Yi suddenly remembered that Xiahou Xuan, a relative of Cao Shuang's, still commanded the Yongzhou region. In his position he might be a real danger, and must be removed. So Sima Yi issued an edict summoning Xiahou Xuan to the capital to discuss affairs.

When Xiahou Ba, uncle of Xiahou Xuan, heard about this, he was extremely alarmed. Taking his 3,000 soldiers, he started an uprising. As soon as this was known, Guo Huai led his army to suppress him. The two forces were soon posed face to face, and Guo Huai rode to the front and began to revile his opponent.

"How could you rebel against the ruling house, you who are a member of the royal family? The Emperor has never done you any harm."

Xiahou Ba replied, "My father did a tremendous service to the state, but who is this Sima Yi that he has put to death the whole clan of my cousin Cao Shuang—and now he even attempts to destroy me? He is the one who will sooner or later usurp the throne. I am going to punish the rebel in the name of justice. What revolt is this?"

Provoked to anger, Guo Huai rode forward to attack, and Xiahou Ba whirled his sword and advanced to engage him.

After less than ten bouts, Guo Huai fled in defeat. Xiahou Ba followed in pursuit, but suddenly he heard shouts in the rear and turned to see Chen Tai closing in to attack. At the same moment Guo Huai also turned back, and thus Xiahou Ba was caught between two enemy forces. Unable to fight back, he fled with heavy losses. As there was no alternative open to him, he set out for Hanzhong to desert to Shu.

When Jiang Wei was informed of his intention to surrender, he could hardly believe his ears. But he did not allow Xiahou Ba to enter Hanzhong until he had found out the whole truth. When he was finally taken before Jiang Wei, Xiahou Ba bowed and related the events in tears.

Jiang Wei said, "In the past Wei Zi left the court of Zhou and earned himself an everlasting fame. You, sir, have now come to assist in the restoration of the Hans, and you stand no inferior to your predecessor."

A banquet was given in his honor. During the dinner Jiang Wei asked him, "Sima Yi and his sons are now the most powerful men in Wei. Do you think they have any intention to attack us?"

"The old rascal is planning to usurp the throne and has enough on his mind to worry about, without any outside campaigns. However, two young men in Wei have lately come to the front, and if they are given command of an army they will pose a great threat to your country, as well as Wu."

"And who are these two?"

“One is named Zhong Hui, a native of Changshe and son of Zhong Yao. As a boy he was noted for being bold and smart. His father used to take him and his brother to the palace. Zhong Hui was seven and his brother a year older. Once, Cao Pi noticed that the elder boy was sweating and asked him the reason.

“‘I tremble with fear, and sweat pours out like milk,’ replied the elder boy.

“‘And why is it that you do not sweat?’ asked the Emperor to Hui.

“‘I tremble with fear, and sweat dares not appear,’ replied the boy.

“The Emperor was amazed at the extraordinary wit of the boy. When he grew a little older, the lad was interested in studying books on war and tactics, and became an able strategist. Both Sima Yi and Jiang Ji are impressed by his talent.

“The second man is Deng Ai, a native of Yiyang. An orphan from early childhood, he is, nevertheless, highly ambitious. Whenever he sees high mountains or big rivers he will point out those places where encampments can be made, provisions stored, or ambushes laid. People ridicule him, but Sima Yi admires his ability and has employed the young man as a military advisor.

“Deng Ai stammers when he speaks, and every time he addresses his master, he begins ‘Ai-Ai.’ Once Sima Yi made

fun of him and asked, 'You should call yourself Ai-Ai—how many Ais are there?'

"Deng Ai at once quoted a line of poetry and replied, 'Oh phoenix, oh phoenix; and there is but one phoenix.' This ready repartee shows the quickness of his intellect. He and Zhong Hui are much to be feared."

Jiang Wei smiled. "I don't think these youths are worth worrying about."

Jiang Wei took Xiahou Ba to the capital to present him before the Second Ruler.

He said to the Second Ruler, "Sima Yi plotted the death of Cao Shuang and then tried to take Xiahou Ba's life. So Xiahou Ba came to surrender. Now Sima Yi and his sons have supreme power. The ruler of Wei is weak and his kingdom is about to fall. I have been stationed in Hanzhong for several years. The army is strong and the supplies are ample. I would like to lead the imperial army, with Xiahou Ba as guide, to recover the northern land and restore the House of Han. Thus I can repay Your Majesty's kindness to me and realize the late prime minister's wish."

But Fei Yi was opposed to his proposal for an expedition. "Lately, both Jiang Wan and Dong Yun died and the government lacks able counselors. We should wait for a good opportunity and not take any rash action at the moment."

"No," Jiang Wei objected. "Life is short. Our days flash by as a white steed races over a rift. If we delay like this, when are we to restore Han to its former glory?"

Fei Yi responded, “Remember the saying of the ancient strategist Sun Tzu: ‘Know yourself and know your enemy; then is victory assured.’ We’re in no way to be compared with the late prime minister, and where he failed, are we likely to succeed?”

Jiang Wei said, “I have lived in Longshang for a long time and know the Qiang people well. With their help, even if we do not recover the whole of the northern territory, we can at least conquer and hold everything west of Longxi.”

The Second Ruler here closed the discussion by saying to Jiang Wei: “Sir, as you desire to conquer Wei, do your best. Do not let the enemy dampen the fighting spirit of your men and fail my command.”

Having secured the Second Ruler’s consent, Jiang Wei left the court and departed with Xiahou Ba to Hanzhong to prepare for a new expedition.

“Let’s first send an envoy to the Qiang people to make a league with them,” said Jiang Wei. “Then march out by Xiping to get close to Yongzhou, where we will throw up two ramparts in the Qu Hills and garrison them so that they can support each other. Then we will store our supplies at Chuankou, and advance gradually according to the plan devised by the late prime minister.”

In the autumn of that year they sent two Shu generals, Gou An and Li Xin, with a force of 15,000 men, to construct the two fortifications. Gou An was to hold the fortress in the east and his colleague, the one in the west.

Wei scouts brought the news to Guo Huai in Yongzhou, who at once sent a report to Luoyang and at the same time dispatched Chen Tai with 50,000 men to oppose the men of Shu. When the Wei army arrived both the Shu officers led their men to meet it, but as they were outnumbered they retreated into their strongholds. The army of Wei laid siege and occupied the road that led to Hanzhong, cutting off their enemy's supply route. So the men of Shu became short of food.

At this time, Guo Huai came with another force to see what progress his two lieutenants were making. At the sight of the enemy position he rejoiced exceedingly, and when he returned to camp he said to Chen Tai: "They've built their fortresses on high ground, which means they must be short of water and will have to come out to get it. Let's alter the course of the water upstream and they will perish of thirst."

So soldiers were set to work to divert the watercourse upstream, and the besieged were soon keenly aware of the anguish of thirst. Li Xin led out a force to try to obtain water, but although he fought fiercely he was at length worsted and had to retreat behind the ramparts. Meanwhile the soldiers were parched with thirst.

Gou An said, "Our commander's army has still not arrived. I wonder what's holding him up."

Li Xin suggested: "Let me go forth to get help."

So the gates were opened, and Li Xin rode out with several dozen cavalrymen to make a sortie. The men of Wei swarmed around to oppose them. Li Xin had to fight every inch of the

way forward but eventually broke through alone, severely wounded. All his men had fallen.

That night, however, a strong north wind brought a heavy fall of snow, and the besieged were thus temporarily relieved from lack of water. They melted the snow and prepared food.

Li Xin, sorely wounded, plodded ahead through the western hills. After two days he met Jiang Wei. He dismounted, prostrated himself, and told him about the emergent situation.

Jiang Wei said, “I didn’t mean to come so late but I was waiting for the Qiang troops and so was delayed.”

Jiang Wei arranged to have Li Xin escorted back to Shu to nurse his wounds. Then turning to Xiahou Ba, he asked him if he had any plan to propose to relieve the siege at the Qu Hills.

Xiahou Ba replied, “If we wait for the Qiang army to come it will be too late to relieve our men in the Qu Hills. The men of Yongzhou, I think, must have all gone to besiege the two ramparts, leaving their city undefended. So I propose that you go to the Ox Head Hills behind Yongzhou, which will cause the Wei troops to hurry back to rescue Yongzhou and the siege at the Qu Hills can be lifted.”

“An excellent plan,” replied Jiang Wei with joy. And he set out for the Ox Head Hills.

When Chen Tai saw that Li Xin had escaped, he said to his chief, “Now that this man has got out he will try to get help from Jiang Wei, who will assume that all our forces are assembled here and will try to get to Ox Head Hills to attack

our rear. Therefore I suggest, General, that you go to the Tao River and break their supply route, while I lead half of the force to go to the Ox Head Hills to engage them. They will retreat as soon as they know their supplies are threatened."

Guo Huai agreed and marched secretly to occupy the Tao River, while his comrade went to the hills.

When Jiang Wei came near the Ox Head Hills he heard a great shouting from his men in front, and scouts reported that the road ahead was barred by the enemy. Jiang Wei himself rode forward to look.

There he saw Chen Tai, who shouted, "So you intended to attack Yongzhou, didn't you? I have been waiting for you for a long time."

Jiang Wei angrily rode forth to attack. His opponent advanced with a flourish of his sword, and they engaged. After only three bouts, Chen Tai ran away in defeat. The men of Shu pressed on, and the men of Wei retreated to the summit of a hill. Jiang Wei called back his men and encamped at the foot of the Ox Head Hills. Every day Jiang Wei challenged his enemy, but neither side won a decisive victory.

After several days of this Xiahou Ba said, "This is no place to stay long. We have been fighting against them without any result. I think the enemy is trying to hold us here while they employ some trick elsewhere. We'd better abandon this place first and formulate some other plans."

Just then it was reported that Guo Huai had occupied the Tao River and closed their supply road. Greatly startled, Jiang

Wei immediately told Xiahou Ba to march back first, while he himself covered the retreat. Chen Tai pursued with five divisions but Jiang Wei held the meeting point of the roads and kept them all in check. Chen Tai retreated into the hills, from where he ordered his men to shoot arrows and hurl stones down at the Shu troops. Jiang Wei was forced to retreat to the Tao River, where he was again attacked by Guo Huai. Jiang Wei led his men to fight this way and that, smiting as he went, but he was surrounded by more and more enemy troops. After a desperate effort he got away, but most of his men perished.

Jiang Wei hastened toward Yangping Pass. There he encountered another body of the enemy, at the head of which was a Wei general, who galloped forth, his sword ready to strike. This general had a round face, big ears, and a square mouth with thick lips. Below his left eye was a large, hairy mole. He was Sima Shi, elder son of Sima Yi.

"You brat, how dare you stand in my way?" yelled Jiang Wei furiously, as he rode forward with his spear set.

Sima Shi came forward to fight but was defeated in only three bouts. After driving him away Jiang Wei continued toward Yangping Pass. The guards there opened the gates to let him in. Presently Sima Shi also came to seize the pass. Suddenly, from two sides hidden bowmen started to shoot, ten bolts at each discharge. They were using the multiple-shot crossbows that Zhuge Liang had designed before he died.

A disastrous defeat would befall Shu
If not for the Minister's ten-bolt bows.

What happened to Sima Shi will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Bamboo was used as writing material before paper was invented.

* An allusion to Cao Shuang, who would only be thinking about his property and hence would be unable to take Huan Fan's advice.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT

Ding Feng's Swordsmen Win a Victory in the Snow

Sun Jun Executes a Murderous Plan at a Banquet

At the end of the last chapter Jiang Wei met a force under Sima Shi, barring his way of retreat. How did Sima Shi get there? Let us explain. When Jiang Wei was trying to capture Yongzhou, Guo Huai had sent a flying messenger to the capital, whereupon the Emperor of Wei summoned Sima Yi for advice. It was then decided to send Sima Shi with 50,000 men to the city's rescue.

On his way there, Sima Shi heard of the defeat of the Shu army. Thinking that his enemy was weak, he decided to deal them a further blow on their road of escape. So he followed Jiang Wei to Yangping Pass where, however, he was attacked by more than a hundred hidden bowmen armed with the multiple-shot crossbows designed by Zhuge Liang. Since his death, large numbers of these weapons had been produced. The multiple bolts were poisoned, making them especially deadly. Consequently the Wei losses were very heavy, and Sima Shi himself had a narrow escape.

In his rampart the Shu officer Gou An, lacking both water and grain, watched anxiously for the expected help. As it did not

come he ultimately surrendered to Wei. And Jiang Wei, with a greatly reduced army, returned to Hanzhong.

Some time later Sima Yi fell ill and gradually his condition worsened. Feeling that his end was near, he called his two sons to his bedside to hear his last words.

“I have served Wei many years and reached the highest rank possible among ministers. People have suspected me of ulterior motives, which often troubled me. After my death you two are to run the government properly. Never forget my words! Be doubly careful!”

He breathed his last after he said these words. The sons informed the Emperor, who conferred high honors upon the deceased minister and advanced his sons to even higher military posts.

It is now necessary to return to events in the Kingdom of Wu. Sun Quan, the Emperor, had at first named his son Deng, whose mother was Lady Xu, as his heir. But Deng died, and the second son, born of Lady Wang, was chosen to be his successor. A quarrel arose between the new Heir Apparent and Princess Quan, who maligned him and intrigued against him, so he was set aside. He died of mortification. Then the third son was named heir to the throne, whose mother was Lady Pan.

At this time Lu Xun and Zhuge Jin were both dead, and the business of the government, great and small, was in the hands of Zhuge Ke, son of Zhuge Jin.

In the first year of the period of Tai Yuan, on the first day of the eighth month, a hurricane struck the land of Wu. The waves rose to a great height and the ground stood eight feet deep in water. At the tombs of the rulers of Wu, pines and cypresses were uprooted and blown to the southern gate of the capital, where they fell to the ground.

Sun Quan was frightened and fell ill. In the fourth month of the following year his illness became serious, whereupon he called in Zhuge Ke and Lu Dai to hear his last wishes. Soon after he died (A.D. 252), at the age of seventy-one. He had ruled in Wu for twenty-four years.

A hero, blue-eyed and red-bearded,
He called forth devotion from all.
For twenty and four years he reigned the east
Mighty as a dragon or a tiger.

Zhuge Ke immediately placed his late lord's son Sun Liang on the throne, and the new reign was marked by the adoption of the title Jian Xing. A general amnesty was proclaimed. The late ruler received the posthumous style of "Great Emperor" and was buried in the Jiang Mausoleum.

When Sun Quan's death was reported in the Wei capital, Sima Shi at once thought of attacking Wu. But his proposal was opposed by Fu Gu, who said, "Wu has the natural defense of the Yangtze River. The late Emperors launched several expeditions, but none succeeded. It is better for each kingdom to preserve its own borders."

Sima Shi retorted, “The way of Heaven changes every thirty years. How can this three kingdom status quo remain forever? I am going to attack Wu.”

Sima Zhao supported his brother. “The occasion is most opportune. Sun Quan is newly dead and the present ruler is young and weak.”

Therefore an expedition was decided upon. Three armies were mustered, each with 100,000 soldiers. General Wang Chang was ordered to attack Nanjun; General Hu Zhen to seize Dongxing; and Marshal Guanqiu Jian to take Wuchang. Sima Zhao was put in over all command of the three armies.

In the twelfth month of that year the armies drew near the Wu frontiers and camped. Sima Zhao called together the three commanders to discuss the campaign. He said, “Of all the places in Wu, Dongxing is strategically most important. They have now built a great dam there, with two fortresses on its right and left to guard against assaults from Lake Chao behind the city. You must be cautious.”

Then he told Wang Chang and Guanqiu Jian to take 10,000 men each and place themselves to the right and left sides of Dongxing. They were to wait until the city had fallen, when they were to join the attack. Next he appointed Hu Zun leader of the van to command the rest of the forces. “Construct a floating bridge first to seize the great dam,” ordered Sima Zhao. “If you can capture the two fortresses you will have rendered a great service.”

Hu Zun took the order and led his men to construct the bridge.

News of the invasion soon reached Zhuge Ke, who called a general council to discuss how to avert the danger.

The veteran general Ding Feng said, “Dongxing is of vital importance. Its loss will endanger Nanjun and Wuchang.”

“I agree with you entirely, General,” said Zhuge Ke. “Now take 3,000 marines and go to the city by water. I will send three land forces, each 10,000 strong, to reinforce you. When you hear the signal of continuous explosions of bombs, you are to advance in full force. I will follow with the main army later.”

Ding Feng soon sailed out toward Dongxing with his 3,000 men in thirty ships.

In the meantime, the Wei van leader Hu Zun had crossed the floating bridge, and camped his men on the dam. He then sent two officers to assault the flanking forts. Seeing the strength of the Wei army, the Wu officers dared not venture beyond their ramparts, but maintained a resolute defense behind the high walls. Hu Zun made a camp at Xutang.

It was the depth of winter and the weather was intensely cold. A heavy snow fell. Hu Zun and his officers were having a grand feast in their camp when suddenly there came the report that thirty enemy ships had come up the river. The general went out to look and saw the ships coming in to shore, each with about a hundred men on board.

He returned to his tent and said to his officers, “Only 3,000 men! Nothing to be alarmed about.”

Giving an order to keep a careful watch, he and his officers went on with their drinking party.

Ding Feng's ships were all drawn up in line. He said to his officers, "This is the moment for a brave man to win fame and wealth." Then he ordered his men to throw off their armor and helmets, cast aside their long spears and heavy halberds, and arm themselves with only short daggers.

From the shore the men of Wei laughed heartily and took no trouble to prepare themselves against an attack. But suddenly a string of three bombs exploded, and with the roar of the third Ding Feng sprang ashore at the head of his men, who followed close behind, daggers in hand, and made straight for the Wei camp.

The men of Wei, taken completely by surprise, could not make a stand. One officer grasped the big halberd in front of the tent, but Ding Feng stabbed him in the chest, and he rolled over. Another Wei officer came round from the left to thrust Ding Feng with his spear, but Ding Feng seized its shaft and held it firmly under his arm. The Wei officer let go of the spear and turned to flee, but Ding Feng sent his sword flying after him and wounded him in the shoulder. As he fell, Ding Feng pierced him to death with the man's own spear.

The 3,000 Wu marines assaulted the Wei camp, slaying as they would. Hu Zun fled. His men tried to escape by the floating bridge, but that gave way and many were thrown into the water and drowned. Many more lay dead on the snow-covered ground. The spoils of military gear that fell to Wu was immense. When the defeat in Dongxing was known, Sima Zhao and the others retreated.

Zhuge Ke soon arrived at Dongxing, where he recollected his troops and distributed rewards among them in celebration of the victory. Then he said to his officers, “Sima Zhao has returned to the north in defeat. This is the best time for us to destroy Wei.”

So he sent an envoy to Shu to engage the aid of Jiang Wei, promising to divide the empire between them once they had conquered Wei. At the same time, he mobilized 200,000 men for an expedition against Wei.

Just before the army set out, a mass of white vapor suddenly emerged from the earth and gradually enveloped the whole army. Men could not see each other.

“This is a white rainbow and it means destruction of the army,” said Jiang Yan. “Sir, you must return to court and curtail this expedition.”

“How dare you utter such ill-omened words and blunt the keenness of my army?” cried Zhuge Ke angrily.

He ordered the executioners to take him out and put him to death. Jiang Yan’s colleagues interceded for him and Zhuge Ke spared his life, but stripped him of all rank.

Ding Feng put forward a suggestion. “Xincheng is the gateway to Wei. It will be a sore blow to Sima Zhao if we can capture that place.”

Zhuge Ke welcomed this suggestion warmly and gave orders for the army to march toward Xincheng. The commanding officer at the city was Zhang Te. When he saw the men of Wu

coming in full force, he closed the city gates and maintained a defense. The Wu army laid a siege.

A messenger was sent to Luoyang to report the invasion from Wu.

One official said to Sima Shi, "Wu is laying siege to Xincheng. Our best policy is not to give battle, but simply hold out as long as possible. When the besiegers have exhausted their provisions they will be compelled to withdraw. As they retreat we can smite them. However, it is necessary to also guard against invasion from Shu."

Sima Shi took his advice and accordingly Sima Zhao was sent to reinforce Guo Huai to ward off possible attacks from Jiang Wei, while Guanqiu Jian and Hu Zun were to resist the Wu army.

For months the army of Zhuge Ke battered Xincheng without success. He urged his officers to make strenuous efforts, threatening to put to death anyone who did not exert himself. At last his efforts produced an effect, for the northeast corner of the wall was about to give way.

Then the commander of Xincheng thought of a plan. He sent an eloquent messenger out to see Zhuge Ke, taking with him the city's census records. The man told the Wu commander that it was a rule in Wei that if a city held out for a hundred days and no rescue came, its commandant might surrender without implicating his family for punishment.

"Now the city has held out for over ninety days," continued the messenger. "My master hopes you will allow him to

withstand the few days necessary to complete the hundred. Then he will yield with his army and people. Here he asked me to present you first the records of the city's residents."

Zhuge Ke was taken in. He recalled his men and ceased the attack. Seeing how well he had tricked the men of Wu into suspending the assault, Zhang Te at once pulled down some houses and mended the wall. As soon as the repairs were complete, he ascended the wall and abused his opponents: "I have half a year's provisions in the city. Do you think I will surrender to you Wu dogs? What do I care about your attacks!"

The defense became as vigorous as before the truce. Zhuge Ke was enraged at being tricked, and urged on the attack. But from the wall flew down flights of arrows and one of them struck him in the forehead, and he fell. He was borne to his tent, but the wound was inflamed, and he became very ill.

Their commander's illness disheartened the men, who had no desire to fight. Moreover, the weather was very hot and sickness invaded the camp. So by the time Zhuge Ke recovered sufficiently to resume command and continue the attack, he was told that the men were too ill to give battle.

In an outburst of anger Zhuge Ke said, "Whoever mentions illness again will be beheaded!"

When the report of this threat got abroad, the men began to desert freely. Even an officer went over to the enemy with his whole force. Zhuge Ke began to feel really alarmed and rode through the camps to see for himself. Truly enough, the men all looked sickly, their faces sallow and swollen.

So Zhuge Ke decided to withdraw to his own country. The enemy took the opportunity to harass his army and inflicted a severe defeat. Mortified by the course of events, he pretended illness and shunned the court.

The Emperor himself visited him in his residence to inquire after him, and officials, civil and military, also went to pay their respects. In order to silence criticism, Zhuge Ke assumed an attitude of extreme severity, investigating every officer's misconduct, punishing rigorously any fault, and meting out sentences that ranged from exile to border regions to death by exposure. Terror gripped everyone. Furthermore, he also placed two of his trusted officers in charge of the Imperial Guards, making them his teeth and claws in the palace.

Now Sun Jun, former head of the Imperial Guards, was a great grandson of Sun Jing, brother of Sun Jian. When Sun Quan was alive, he loved the young man very much and had put him in command of the Imperial Guards. He was enraged at being superseded by the two confidants of Zhuge Ke.

His discontent was noticed by an official named Teng Yin, who had an old quarrel with Zhuge Ke. He said to Sun Jun, "This Zhuge Ke abuses his power and persecutes court officials. He will one day rebel against the throne. You, sir, are a member of the ruling family. Why not stop him as early as possible?"

"I have been meaning to get rid of him for a long time," replied Sun Jun. "Now I will obtain an edict from the Emperor to condemn him to death."

Both went in to see the Emperor and laid the matter before him.

"I am afraid of him, too," replied the Emperor. "I have wanted to remove him for some time, but have found no opportunity. If you are loyal to me, plan his destruction in secret."

Teng Yin said, "Your Majesty can invite him to a banquet, and have armed guards hidden behind a screen. At the signal of the dropping of a wine cup, they will slay him. That will avoid future trouble."

Since his return from the failed expedition, Zhuge Ke had remained moping at home, pleading an indisposition. One day he happened to go out of his front hall and suddenly saw coming into his house a person dressed in the hempen garb of mourning.

"Who are you?" asked Zhuge Ke.

The man was terrified and could not reply. Zhuge Ke had him seized for interrogation.

The man said, "My father has died and I came to the city to seek a monk to perform the memorial service. Just now I saw a temple here so I walked in, but I did not know it is the minister's residence. I did not know how I came to be here."

The gate wardens were questioned. "There are dozens of us guarding the gate holding our spears," they said. "We have never left the gate for a moment and we have not seen any man enter."

In wrath Zhuge Ke had the man and the guards all put to death. But that night he was unable to sleep. Suddenly, he heard a rending sound from the front hall, so he rose to see what it was. The main beam had split in two. Much disturbed, he returned to his chamber, where he was greeted by a cold blast of wind and there he saw the hemp-clad mourner and the gate wardens he had put to death. All of them advanced toward him holding their heads in their hands and asking him to give them back their lives. The apparition frightened him and he fell in a swoon.

The next morning, when washing his face he found the basin of water tainted with the smell of blood. He told the maid to change the water but it made no difference. The odor was still there, even after changing the water dozens of times. What could this portend? He was feeling alarmed and perplexed when there came a messenger from the Emperor inviting him to a royal banquet. So he ordered his carriage. But as he was leaving the gate a yellow dog caught his robe in its teeth and then whined like a man weeping.

"The dog is mocking me," he said, annoyed, and he ordered his attendants to drive it away. Then he set out for the palace. Before he had gone far, he saw a white rainbow rise out of the earth and reaching up to the sky. This sight again filled his heart with surprise and fear.

Then his confidant, Zhang Yue, came up to his carriage and whispered to him in secret: "This banquet in the palace is rather suspicious. You should not go so rashly, my lord."

Zhuge Ke took his advice and ordered the carriage to turn back, but he had gone only a dozen paces when the two conspirators rode up and asked him why he was returning.

"I have a stomach ache and cannot see the Emperor today," replied Zhuge Ke.

They said, "Since you returned from the expedition, His Majesty has not yet talked with you in person. So he is giving this banquet especially to discuss state affairs with you. You may be feeling ill, sir, but you should still try to attend."

Zhuge Ke was persuaded and went to the palace with the two conspirators. Zhang Yue also followed into the palace. Zhuge Ke made his obeisance to the Emperor and took his place at the banquet. The Emperor ordered the attendants to serve wine but Zhuge Ke, thinking it might be poisoned, excused himself from drinking on account of his state of health.

"Sir, you often take medicated wine at home," said Sun Jun. "Would you like to have some brought to you from your own residence?"

"Yes, I could drink that," replied Zhuge Ke.

So his attendant was sent to get the wine from his home. When the wine was brought, Zhuge Ke began to drink with ease.

After the wine had gone several rounds, the Emperor left the banquet hall with an excuse. Sun Jun went down the hall, took off his long robe, and changed into a short coat under which he wore his armor. Then he returned to the hall sword

in hand, shouting, “The Emperor has issued an edict to slay the rebel!”

Extremely startled, Zhuge Ke dropped his cup to draw his sword, but it was too late. Before he could defend himself his head rolled to the floor. Seeing this, Zhang Yue drew his sword and rushed to Sun Jun, who sidestepped and the sword cut a finger on his left hand. Sun Jun slashed back at Zhang Yue and wounded him in the right arm. Then the hidden guards dashed in and finished him off.

The guards were then sent to slay Zhuge Ke’s family, while the bodies of the two victims were hastily rolled in matting, dropped into a cart, and driven outside the south gate to be thrown into a rubbish pit.

While Zhuge Ke was being murdered in the palace, his wife sat in her chamber feeling strangely upset. Presently a maid came in and her mistress asked her, “Why do you smell of blood?”

To her horror the maid suddenly rolled her eyes, gritted her teeth, and jumped up till her head hit the roof beam. “I am Zhuge Ke,” she cried. “I have been slain by that ruffian, Sun Jun!”

The whole family were frightened and began wailing. A few minutes later the residence was surrounded by armed guards and all of Zhuge Ke’s family members were bound, taken to the market place, and put to death.

These events occurred in the second year of the period Jian Xing in the Kingdom of Wu.

In former days, when Zhuge Jin was alive, he had noticed how his son Zhuge Ke showed off his wit and ability, and had remarked, “He is not a son that will safeguard his family.”

An official of Wei had also predicted his early death. When asked why, he replied, “How can a man live long when he outshines his lord?”

Sun Jun, having slain his rival, was heaped with high honors. He was also given command of all the armed forces. From then on, all power rested in his hands.

Away in the Shu capital, Jiang Wei had received Zhuge Ke’s letter asking him to launch a joint attack against Wei. Jiang Wei sought an audience with the Second Ruler and obtained an edict to raise an army to conquer the north.

The army fought, but fought in vain,
Success may crown a new campaign.

The fate of the new campaign will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINE

Jiang Wei Employs a Surprise to Defeat Sima Zhao

The Emperor of Wei Is Dethroned

It was in the autumn of the sixteenth year of the period Yanxi (A.D. 253) that Jiang Wei's army of 200,000 was ready to start a new campaign against Wei. He appointed Liao Hua and Zhang Yi leaders of the van, Xiahou Ba military advisor, and Zhang Ni commander of the supply force. The army marched out through Yingping Pass.

Discussing the plan with Xiahou Ba, Jiang Wei said, "Our former attack on Yongzhou failed, so this time they will doubtlessly be prepared. Have you any better plans?"

Xiahou Ba replied, "Of all places in Longshang, Nanan is the richest city. If we take that it will serve as an excellent base. Our former attempt failed because the Qiang army did not come. Therefore, this time we should first ask them to join us at Longyou, from where we will move out from Shiying, through Dongting, to take Nanan."

Jiang Wei readily approved the plan and at once sent an envoy to Qiang, bearing gifts of gold and pearls and Shu silk to seek help from its king. The mission was successful—the

king accepted the presents and led 50,000 men to Nanan, with General Eheshaoge as the leader of the van.

When Guo Huai heard of the threatened attack, he dispatched an emergency message to Luoyang. Sima Shi at once asked for a volunteer to go and meet the army from the west. A general named Xu Zhi offered himself. Knowing full well of his distinguished valor, Sima Shi was very pleased and appointed him leader of the van of the army to be commanded by his brother, Sima Zhao.

The Wei army set out for Longxi. As it reached Dongting it encountered the Shu army. When both sides were arrayed Xu Zhi, who wielded a mighty ax called "Splitter of Mountains," rode out and challenged. Liao Hua went forth to fight, but after a few bouts he had to flee in defeat. Zhang Yi set his spear and rode forth to continue the combat yet he, too, was soon worsted and returned to his own ranks. With these victories Xu Zhi led his men to press on. The army of Shu lost the day and retreated thirty li. Sima Zhao also drew off his men. Both sides encamped.

At the Shu camp Jiang Wei took counsel with his advisor. "Xu Zhi is truly formidable; how can we overcome him?"

Xiahou Ba replied, "Tomorrow let us fake defeat and so draw him into an ambush."

"But as son of Sima Yi," said Jiang Wei, "Sima Zhao can't be a novice in war, and if he sees a likely spot for an ambush he won't give chase. Now the men of Wei have often tried to block our supply routes—let's use the same tactic to beguile them and we will be able to slay this Xu Zhi."

Jiang Wei called in the two van leaders and gave them secret instructions. The two left with their forces. Then he ordered the soldiers to scatter caltrops along all the roads and place abatis, as if settling in for a long occupation.

Daily the men of Wei came to challenge but their opponents refused to give battle. Scouts of Wei reported that the men of Shu were using the wooden oxen and running horses to transport supplies along the rear of the Iron Cage Hill for a prolonged stay, until the Qiang tribesmen could come to reinforce them.

Sima Zhao summoned his van leader to whom he said: "We formerly defeated the Shu army by cutting off their routes of supplies and we can do that again. Now they are bringing up grain behind the Iron Cage Hill. Tonight you take 5,000 men to block their grain route and they will withdraw of their own accord."

At about the first watch Xu Zhi marched toward the hill, and when he got there he saw a couple of hundred men driving a hundred or so mechanical animals laden with grain and forage. The men of Wei rushed upon them with shouts, Xu Zhi himself in the lead, and the Shu troops at once abandoned their supplies and ran away. Xu Zhi took possession of the grain, which he sent back to his own camp under the escort of half his men. With the other half he set out in pursuit.

About ten li away, the road was found blocked with wagons lying across. Xu Zhi ordered his men to clear the way, but before they could remove the vehicles the brushwood on both sides suddenly burst into flames. Xu Zhi at once turned to retreat but soon found himself in a narrow mountain path,

which was again blocked with wagons, and again the brushwood began to burn. Braving the fire and smoke, he made a dash to escape, but at that moment a bomb roared, and he saw Liao Hua and Zhang Yi descending on him from two directions. Both fell on him with great fury, and the men of Wei were wholly defeated. Xu Zhi alone got clear, both himself and his horse exhausted with fatigue.

As he struggled on in haste he saw another troop in his way, and the leader was Jiang Wei. Scared, he could make no resistance. His horse fell from a spear thrust, throwing Xu Zhi down to the ground, and he was killed by Shu soldiers.

Meanwhile, the other half of his force escorting the grain was also captured by Xiahou Ba. The men surrendered. Xiahou Ba then stripped them of their outfits and disguised his men as Wei soldiers. Holding aloft banners of Wei, these disguised men made for the Wei camp. Seeing their own comrades had returned the men at the camp threw open the gates to let them enter.

The moment they rushed in they began to kill. Taken wholly by surprise, Sima Zhao leaped upon his steed to escape but he was barred in front by Liao Hua. He hastened to retreat, but Jiang Wei camp up from another direction. With no other way of escape, Sima Zhao had to lead his army to the Iron Cage Hill.

Now there was but one road up the hill, which rose steeply on all other sides. And there was but one small spring, with water enough for a mere hundred men, but Sima Zhao's force numbered 6,000. Jiang Wei had blocked the only road. This one fountain was unequal to supplying the needs of the

beleaguered force, and soon men and horses were tormented with thirst. In despair, Sima Zhao looked up to Heaven and sighed. “Here I’m going to die!”

In this critical situation a civil officer, Wang Tao by name, advised him to imitate an ancient general, named Geng Gong, who, caught in a similar plight, prayed on his knees before a well and was rewarded with sweet water. Sima Zhao took the advice and went to the summit of the hill, where he knelt beside the spring and prayed: “I, Zhao, received a command to repulse the army of Shu. If I am to die here, then may this spring cease its flow, and I will end my own life and let my soldiers yield to the enemy. But if my allotted span of life is not over, then, may the Blue Vault above increase the flow of water and save the lives of this multitude.”

When he finished his prayer water gushed forth aplenty, so that both men and horses survived.

Jiang Wei, who had surrounded the hill, said to his officers, “I’ve always regretted that our late prime minister was unable to capture Sima Yi in the Gourd Valley, but now I think his son is doomed to fall into our hands.”

However, news of Sima Zhao’s plight had reached Guo Huai, who intended to rescue him.

But Chen Tai said to him, “Jiang Wei has made a league with the Qiang people to first capture Nanan. Now the Qiang troops have already arrived, and if you lead the army to rescue our commander, leaving this city undefended, they will certainly attack us from the rear. I propose we first send someone to feign surrender to the tribesmen and seek

opportunities to destroy them. Only after they are disposed of, can we then lift the siege of the Iron Cage Hill."

Guo Huai adopted his plan and so Chen Tai himself was ordered to take 5,000 men to go to the camp of the king of Qiang. On arrival he entered, after casting off his armor. Weeping and bowing, he said, "Guo Huai considers himself superior to everyone and has often intended to slay me. Therefore I have come to offer my services to you. I know all the secrets of his army and, if you will, this very night I can lead you to raid their camp. I have friends inside to help me once we get there."

The king was taken with the scheme, and sent Erheshaoge to go with Chen Tai. The Wei soldiers were placed in the rear, but Chen Tai was asked to lead the Qiang soldiers in front. They set out at the second watch. When they arrived they found the gates open, and Chen Tai boldly rode in first.

The Qiang leader followed. But suddenly a cry of distress escaped from him, and both he and his horse tumbled into a pit. At the same moment Chen Tai's men in the rear attacked, while Guo Huai appeared on the left. In the confusion the Qiang troops trampled each other down, and many were killed. Those who escaped death surrendered, and the leader, Erheshaoge, committed suicide.

Guo Huai and his colleague then hastened back into the Qiang camp. Caught unprepared, the king of Quiang rushed out of his tent to get to his horse, but was captured. He was taken before Guo Huai, who hastily dismounted, loosened the prisoner's bonds, and soothed him with kindly words.

“Our government has always regarded you as a loyal and true friend,” said Guo Huai. “Why then are you helping our enemies?”

The king sank to the ground in shame, while Guo Huai continued: “If you will lead your men to raise the siege of the Iron Cage Hill and drive off the men of Shu, I will petition the Emperor and obtain a substantial reward for you.”

The king agreed. He set out at once, his own men leading and the men of Wei in the rear. At the third watch he sent on a messenger to tell Jiang Wei of his coming. Overjoyed, Jiang Wei told his men to invite the king inside, leaving the larger portion of his men outside. As the king came up to the camp, Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba went out to welcome him. Now the men of Wei had mingled with the Qiang and, before the king could say a word, the Wei officers started to slay the Shu men. Completely taken aback, Jiang Wei leaped onto his steed and fled, as the mixed force of Wei and Qiang broke into the camp while the men of Shu scattered about and fled for their lives.

Jiang Wei had no weapon in his hand, only his bow and quiver hung at his shoulder. In his hasty flight the arrows all fell out and the quiver was empty. He made for the hills, pursued by Guo Huai. Seeing that Jiang Wei had no weapon to defend himself, Guo Huai raised his spear and rushed forward to chase him. As he came nearer, Jiang Wei laid his hands upon his bow and pulled the string as if he was going to shoot. A dozen times the string twanged. Guo Huai ducked several times but, as he saw no arrows coming, knew Jiang Wei had none to shoot. So he hung up his spear, took his bow and shot at Jiang Wei, who caught the arrow as it flew by and

fitted it to his own bowstring. He waited till Guo Huai came close, then he pulled the string with all his force and sent the arrow flying straight at Guo Huai's face. Guo Huai fell from his horse as the bowstring twanged.

Jiang Wei turned to finish his fallen enemy, but crowds of Wei soldiers rushed up, and he had only time to snatch the wounded man's spear and ride off. The men of Wei did not pursue but hastened to pick up their general and carry him to camp. There the arrowhead was pulled out, but the flow of blood could not be stanched, and Guo Huai died.

Sima Zhao descended from the hill as soon as the siege was lifted. He pursued Jiang Wei some distance but turned back halfway. Xiahou Ba rejoined his comrade, and they hurried back together without stopping at Hanzhong, having taken heavy losses. Though the campaign failed, they had killed Guo Huai, slew Xu Zhi, and had thus damaged the prestige of Wei. So their failures were balanced by their successes.

After rewarding the Qiang troops for their help and sending them homeward, Sima Zhao led his army back to Luoyang, where he joined his brother in administering the government. They were so powerful that none dared to voice any opposition. The Emperor, Cao Fang, was scared of Sima Shi. He trembled whenever he saw him at court, and felt as if needles were pricking his back.

One day, when the Emperor was holding a court, Sima Shi came into the hall wearing his sword. The Emperor hastily left his seat to welcome him.

Sima Shi smiled. “How can an Emperor rise to welcome his minister? Pray remember your own dignity, Your Majesty.”

Then court went into session and officials brought forth various matters to the attention of their ruler. Sima Shi, however, decided everything without even consulting the Emperor, and when the court retired he stalked haughtily down the hall and went into his carriage, surrounded by his escort, which numbered thousands.

When the Emperor went into the inner hall he saw only three people in his company. They were Xiahou Xuan, Li Feng, and Zhang Qi, father of the Empress. Sending away the servants, the Emperor led these three into a private chamber.

Seizing his father-in-law’s hand, the Emperor began to weep, saying, “Sima Shi treats me as a child and regards the officials of state as mere weeds. I fear the throne will be his one of these days.”

And he wept bitterly. Li Feng said, “Do not worry, Your Majesty. I maybe incapable but if Your Majesty will issue an edict, I will call together all bold spirits in the country to destroy this tyrant.”

“It was from fear of the Sima brothers that my uncle was forced to go over to Shu,” said Xiahou Xuan. “If they were destroyed, he would certainly return. I belong to a family related to the rulers of the state for many generations, and I will not sit idly while a traitor ruins the government. I will also act on your command to remove him.”

“But I am afraid it cannot be done,” said the Emperor.

They wept and pledged to work together toward the destruction of the tyrant. The Emperor then took off his dragon-and-phoenix undershirt, drew blood from his finger with his teeth, and wrote a command in blood. He gave it to his father-in-law, saying, “In the past my ancestor Emperor Wu (Cao Cao) put Dong Cheng to death because the secret of an identical plan was divulged. You must be exceedingly careful and maintain the greatest secrecy.”

“Your Majesty, why do you utter such ill-omened words?” cried Li Feng. “We are not like Dong Cheng, any more than Sima Shi resembles your great ancestor. Have no doubts.”

The three men took leave and went out, carrying the edict with them. At the Donghua Gate of the palace they saw Sima Shi coming toward them wearing a sword. Following him were hundreds of armed attendants. The three stood by the side of the road.

“Why are you three so late in leaving the palace?” asked Sima Shi.

“His Majesty was reading, and we stayed with him,” said Li Feng.

“What was he reading?”’

“The histories of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties.”

“What questions did the Emperor ask as he read the book?”

“He asked about how Yi Yin upheld the Shangs and how Duke Zhou acted when he was regent. And we told His Majesty that you were both Yi Yin and Duke Zhou to him.”

Sima Shi smiled acidly. “You did not compare me with those two! In your hearts you think of me as Wang Mang or Dong Zhuo!”

“How dare we think like that? We, who are in your service, General.”

“You are a pack of flatterers,” rebuked Sima Shi, angrily. “And what were you crying about in the Emperor’s private chamber?”

“There was no such thing.”

“Your eyes are still red with tears—you cannot deny that.”

By then Xiahou Xuan realized that they had been betrayed already, so he abused Sima Shi fiercely: “We wept because you terrorize over the Emperor and are scheming to usurp the throne.”

“Seize him!” roared Sima Shi.

Xiahou Xuan rolled back his sleeves to strike at Sima Shi with his bare fists, but was captured by armed guards. Then the three were searched, and on Zhang Qi’s person was found the blood-stained garment of the Emperor. They handed it to their chief, who recognized the object of his search, the secret edict.

It said: “Sima Shi and his brother have stolen away all my power and are plotting to take the throne. The edicts I have been forced to issue do not represent my wishes. Therefore I command you, my officers and men, to be loyal to me and unite to destroy these two evil ministers and restore the authority of the throne. On the day of victory I will reward you most handsomely.”

Sima Shi cried out in wrath, “So that is what you are up to! Plotting to destroy me and my brother! How can this be tolerated?”

He ordered his followers to kill them cruelly on the public execution ground and to destroy three generations of their families.

The three abused Sima Shi without ceasing. On their way to the execution ground their teeth were all knocked out. But they went to their death still muttering curses.

Sima Shi then went to the inner chambers of the palace. The Emperor had just told the Empress about this and she said: “The palace is full of spies, and if this comes out it will mean trouble for me.”

At that moment they saw Sima Shi stride in, sword in hand. “My father placed Your Majesty on the throne, a service not inferior to that of Duke Zhou,” he said. “And I have served Your Majesty as Yi Yin served his lord. But now kindness is returned with enmity and service regarded as a fault. Your Majesty has plotted with some mean officials to murder me and my brother. Why is this?”

“I had no such intention,” said the Emperor.

In reply, Sima Shi drew the garment from his sleeve and threw it to the ground.

“Who wrote this?”

The Emperor’s soul flew beyond the skies—his spirit fled to the ninth heaven. Shaking with fear, he said, “I was forced into it. How could I dare to do such a thing?”

“What crime is this, to slander high-ranking ministers with rebellion?” said Sima Shi.

The Emperor fell to his knees and pleaded, “I am guilty—forgive me, General.”

“I beg Your Majesty to rise—the laws of the country must be respected.”

Pointing to the Empress, he said, “She is the daughter of Zhang Qi and must die.”

The Emperor begged him to spare her life, weeping bitterly. But Sima Shi was unrelenting. He ordered his men to lead her away, and she was strangled with a white silk cord at the palace gate.

Now I recall another year and lo!
Empress Fu borne away to cruel death.
Barefooted, weeping bitterly, she bade
Farewell to her lord. But today

History repeats itself, and Sima Shi
Inflicts this on Cao Cao's heirs.

The next day Sima Shi assembled all the officials and addressed them thus: "Our present Emperor is debased and devoid of principles, familiar with the vile and friendly with the impure. He lends a ready ear to slander and keeps virtuous men at a distance. His faults exceed those of Emperor Chang Yi of Han, and he has proved himself unfit to rule. Therefore, following the precedents of Yi Yin and Huo Guang, I have decided to establish another in his place, thereby maintaining the sanctity of the ruling house and ensuring the tranquillity of the state. What do you say to this?"

The officials all chimed in their agreement. "General, you are playing the same role as Yi Yin and Huo Guang once did, in accordance with the will of Heaven and fulfilling the desire of mankind. Who dares to dispute your command?"

Then Sima Shi, followed by the whole assembly of the officials, went to the Palace of Eternal Peace and informed the Empress Dowager of his intention.

"Who do you propose to place on the throne, General?" she asked.

"I have observed that Cao Ju, Prince of Pengcheng, is intelligent, virtuous, and filial. He is fit to rule the empire."

She replied, "He is my uncle. If he were to become Emperor, how should I address him? Alternatively, there is Cao Mao, Duke of Gaogui village, and grandson of Emperor Wen (Cao Pi). He is of mild temperament, respectful, and deferential,

and could be set up. I hope you and the other officials of the state will consider this carefully."

One of the officials said, "Her Majesty is right—we should inaugurate him without delay."

All eyes turned toward the speaker, who was Sima Fu, uncle of Sima Shi.

So an envoy was sent to summon the duke to the capital. Meanwhile, the Empress Dowager was asked to ascend the Hall of Eternity, where Cao Fang was summoned before her. To him she said, "You indulge yourself in lust and choose to befriend the lowly and the vile. You are unfit to rule the state. Therefore submit the imperial seal and revert to your former status of Prince of Qi. Depart at once—you are forbidden to come to court without special command."

Cao Fang bowed to her in tears and handed over the imperial seal. Then he got into his carriage and went away, weeping bitterly. Only a few faithful ministers bade him farewell with tears in their eyes.

Cao Cao, the mighty minister of Han
Bullied the widow and the orphan prince.
Little did he know that forty years away
His own posterity would suffer like fate.

Soon the emperor-elect, Cao Mao, grandson of Cao Pi, was summoned to the capital by Sima Shi in the name of the Empress Dowager. All the officials gathered to pay their obeisance to him at the Xiye Gate, where an imperial carriage stood in waiting. He hastily returned their salutations.

“The ruler ought not to return greetings,” said Wang Su, a high-ranking official.

“I am also an official of the Emperor,” he replied. “How could I not return their greetings?”

The attending officials tried to help him into the carriage to ride into the palace, but he refused to mount it, saying, “I do not know for what reason Her Majesty has commanded my presence. How dare I enter the palace in such a carriage?”

So he walked to the Hall of Eternity, where he was welcomed by Sima Shi. Cao Mao at once bowed to the minister. Hastily Sima Shi bid him raise himself, and after the usual greetings, conducted Cao Mao to the Empress Dowager.

The Empress Dowager said, “In your youth I noticed that you bore the impress of majesty. Now you are to be the ruler of the country. You must be respectful and moderate, diffusing virtue and benevolence. You must do honor to your ancestors.”

Cao Mao modestly declined the proposed honor again and again, but Sima Shi ordered the officials to lead him out of the hall and placed him in the seat of the throne that very day. The reign title was proclaimed as Zheng Yuan. An amnesty was granted. Honors were heaped upon Sima Shi, who was bestowed the golden ax of authority, with the privileges to proceed leisurely to court, to address the throne without announcing his name, and to wear arms at court.

But in the spring of the second year of the period Zheng Yuan it was reported that General Guanqiu Jian and Wen Qin,

Governor of Yangzhou, were raising an army against the capital, accusing Sima Shi of deposing the former emperor.

Sima Shi was greatly alarmed.

As Han had faithful vassals to restore its rule;
Wei officers, too, are keen to denounce the rebel.

How this new menace was met will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TEN

Wen Yang Drives Off a Mighty Host Single-handedly

Jiang Wei Wins a Major Victory Near the Tao River

It was mentioned at the end of the last chapter that Wen Qin, Governor of Yangzhou, and Guanqiu Jian, a distinguished general who commanded the forces in Huainan, were raising an army to avenge the removal of Cao Fang.

Guanqiu Jian, a native of Wenxi in Henan, was moved to great anger when he learned that Sima Shi had deposed the Emperor. His eldest son Dian stoked his father's wrath, saying, "Father, you're chief of a whole district. Now Sima Shi monopolizes power and has even deposed the Emperor. The country is in great danger, can you sit still and do nothing?"

"You're right, my son," he replied.

Therefore he invited Governor Wen Qin to his home to discuss the matter. This Wen Qin had been a follower of Cao Shang's. On receiving the general's invitation he hastened to see him. He was led into the inner hall, where the usual greetings were exchanged first. As they sat talking the host began to weep, and his visitor asked him about the cause of his tears.

“My heart aches to hear Sima Shi has deposed the Emperor and dominates the state,” said Guanqiu Jian. “He has turned everything upside down.”

“General, you are commander of an entire district,” replied Wen Qin. “If you are willing to uphold justice and take arms to denounce the rebel, I will help you, whatever the consequences. My second son is a bold soldier, able to withstand a whole host of enemies. He has often wanted to slay the Sima brothers to avenge the death of Cao Shuang. He would make an excellent leader of the van.”

Guanqiu Jian was delighted to get such ready and willing support, and the two poured a libation to pledge their mutual good faith. Then, pretending that they held an edict from the Empress Dowager, they summoned all the officers in the region to Shouchun, where they built an altar in the western part of the city and sacrificed a white horse, smearing their lips with its blood in token of their oath. To the assembled officers they declared that Sima Shi had committed the crime of treason and they had a secret edict from Her Majesty commanding them to muster the forces of Huainan and put down this rebellion for the sake of justice and loyalty. All were happy to answer to the call.

Thus supported, Guanqiu Jian led 60,000 men to Xiangcheng, where he camped, while Wen Qin took 20,000 men to patrol outside the city, lending help where it was needed. Letters were sent all through the district calling for more assistance.

In Luoyang, Sima Shi had been afflicted by a mole below his left eye, causing him pain or itching at times, so he decided to have it removed. The surgeon excised it, closed and dressed

the wound, and Sima Shi convalesced in his house. But before his wound could heal he received the disquieting news of the uprising in Huainan. He called in Wang Su to discuss the matter.

Wang Su said, “In former days, Guan Yu was the one man to fear in the whole empire. Later, Sun Quan sent Lu Meng to capture Jingzhou. What did he do? He first won over the officers by taking care of their families, and thus the morale of his enemy crumbled like falling tiles. Now the families of all the officers of Huainan are here in the north. Do something at once to show them that you care for them. At the same time send an army to block the rebels’ way of escape, and they will collapse too.”

“You are perfectly right,” agreed Sima Shi. “However, I cannot go myself as I have just had an operation—yet I will feel insecure if I send another in my place.”

At this time Zhong Hui was also present and he said, “The forces of Huainan are formidable and their men have high morale. It will be harmful if you send another to repel them. Should anything go wrong your whole design will fail.”

“No one but myself can succeed,” cried Sima Shi, starting from his couch. “I must go.”

So, in spite of his illness, he resolved to lead in person. He left his brother in charge of affairs at Luoyang and set out eastward, traveling in a padded carriage. Zhuge Dan was given command of all the forces of Yuzhou and ordered to take possession of Shouchun; Hu Zun, with the Qingzhou forces, was sent to advance from the Qiao and Song regions

to bar any retreat of their enemy; and Wang Ji was to lead the vanguard division to conquer the southern district first. He himself led the main force to camp at Xiangyang.

In his tent Sima Shi summoned all his officers to a council.

Zheng Mao spoke first. “Guanqiu Jian is fond of laying plans, but slow to come to any decision, while Wen Qin is bold, but imprudent.” However, after depreciating their opponents thus he went on to suggest a defensive policy. “Although they are unprepared for our great army, I suggest we do not engage them lightly as their men are in highly combative spirits. We should remain on the defensive till their ardor has burned out. This was the strategy employed by General Zhou Ya-fu in the old days.”

Wang Ji objected: “This rebellion is the work of Guanqiu Jian. Neither the people nor the soldiers want to rebel but are forced into it because they are afraid of his power. The rebellion will go to pieces as soon as our army approaches.”

Sima Shi took Wang Ji’s advice and advanced to the Yin River, placing the center division on the bridge.

Then Wang Ji offered another piece of advice. “Nandun is an excellent camping ground,” he said. “You must occupy it at once, otherwise the enemy will do so.”

Sima Shi approved and sent Wang Ji to carry out his own plan.

Reports of Sima Shi’s movements came to Guanqiu Jian in his headquarters and an assembly of officers was called. The

leader of the van, Ge Yong, said: “Nandun is an excellent site for a camp, with a river beside it and hills around. If Sima Shi’s men seize it first we will be unable to dislodge them. Let’s make haste and occupy it.”

So Guanqiu Jian and his army set out. But on the way, scouts reported an army already encamped there. Finding it hard to believe, Guanqiu Jian rode to the front to see for himself. And there he saw flags fluttering over the whole field and tents pitched in orderly array. The sight distressed him, and he rode back to his army, not knowing what to do. Just then, scouts galloped up to say that Sun Jun of Wu had crossed the river to attack Shouchun.

“If that city is lost I will have no place to return to,” cried Guanqiu Jian.

That night he retreated back to Xiangcheng. Seeing the enemy retreat, Sima Shi again called together his officers for consultation. One of them, Fu Gu by name, explained that the retreat was obviously due to their fear of Wu’s attack on Shouchun and that they must have returned to Xiangcheng to send part of their force to defend it.

“General, you can order one force to take Yuejia, another to seize Xiangcheng, and a third to capture Shouchun,” added Fu Gu. “The Governor of Yanzhou, Deng Ai, is a very good strategist. If he is entrusted with the attack upon Yuejia, and further supported by a strong force, it will not be hard to destroy the enemy.”

His plan was accepted by Sima Shi, who dispatched an urgent message to Yanzhou, instructing Deng Ai to lead his own

force to seize Yuejia, where he would soon be joined by Sima Shi himself.

Camped at Xiangcheng, Guanqiu Jian continuously sent spies to Yuejia to reconnoiter for fear it might be attacked. When he spoke of his worries to Wen Qin, the latter replied, "General, don't be anxious. With 5,000 soldiers, my son and I will guarantee its safety."

This offer pleased Guanqiu Jian very much and so Wen Qin and his son, with the 5,000, marched out toward Yuejia. But as they drew near the city, soldiers from the front division reported that Wei troops, about 10,000 strong, were seen to the west of the city. Looking from afar toward the center of the Wei army, they spotted the various symbols of authority surrounding a large tent, from which rose an embroidered banner with the character Commander in the middle. The leader was obviously none other than Sima Shi himself. His men were busy pitching their camp.

When this was reported to Wen Qin, his son Wen Yang, bearing his famous whip of steel, was by his father's side.

"We can score a complete victory if we attack them from two sides before they have established their camp, father."

"When are we to start?" asked the father.

"At dusk. Father, you lead half the force to attack from the south, and with the other half I will smite from the north. We will meet at the Wei camp by the third watch."

The youth who propounded this plan was then just eighteen, tall and strong. He wore complete armor and carried at his waist a steel whip. When the hour came to start he took his spear, swung himself into the saddle, and set out.

After arriving at Yuejia Sima Shi encamped and waited for Deng Ai, but the latter had not yet come. That night he lay in his tent, for he was still suffering pain from the wound beneath his left eye. All around the tent hundreds of armored guards stood vigilant.

At about the third watch he suddenly heard a thunderous shouting, followed by a great turmoil among his men and horses. He hastily asked what it was and was told that an army had broken in from the north, led by an officer who was too bold for anyone to withstand.

Sorely alarmed, Sima Shi felt his heart burning within him, which caused his wound to open. Blood flowed freely as his eyeball protruded from the wound and the pain became unbearable. But in his fear lest his army should be thrown into confusion, he dared not utter a sound but lay biting the quilt to fight down the pain. The quilt was gnawed to rags.

Wen Yang's force had arrived first and attacked immediately. He dashed into the camp, slashing and thrusting right and left, and the Wei men fled before him. Those who tried to oppose him fell under his sharp spear or his terrible whip. All the time he was anxiously expecting his father to reinforce him from outside, but he was nowhere in sight. Several times he charged toward the center camp. However, he was driven back by the fierce flights of arrows and crossbow bolts. He fought on till daylight, when he heard a mixed noise of drums

and horns in the north. Surprised, he said to those around him, "Why is father coming from the north instead of supporting me from the south?"

He galloped forth to see what was happening, and saw a force sweeping down like a storm.

It was not his father, but an enemy troop led by Deng Ai, who rushed forward, holding his sword crosswise, shouting, "You rebel! Do not try to flee!"

Setting his spear Wen Yang rode furiously toward his opponent. They engaged and fought fifty bouts without either gaining the advantage. The duel raged on, but at that moment the Wei army attacked from the rear in full force, and Wen Yang's men began to scatter and run. Soon Wen Yang found himself alone.

However, he got clear of the fight and went away toward the south. But behind him came several hundred Wei officers, who plucked up their courage to pursue. They pressed on his heels as far as the Yuejia Bridge and it seemed they would catch up with him. Suddenly Wen Yang turned his steed and plunged into them. As he raised his steel whip, so the men of Wei fell from their horses and the rest retreated in fear. Wen Yang then slowly forced his way southward.

Incredulous, the Wei officers gathered together and said to each other, "This man even dares to force us all back! Let's work together to press him."

Therefore they resumed their pursuit.

“You fools?” cried Wen Qin, as he saw them coming on. “Do you not care for your lives?”

Again he fell upon them and slew several with his great whip. Then he again turned to continue his way forward at a leisurely pace. The chase was repeated a few more times, but each attempt was repelled by Wen Yang single-handedly. A poem compared his prowess to that of Zhao Yun at the Long Slope:

Holding off Cao Cao’s mighty host alone
Zi-long’s valor had stood peerless since.
Then at Yuejia where the battle was fierce,
The bold Wen Yang bore down another host.

Wen Qin never reached the appointed rendezvous. In the darkness he lost his way among the rugged mountain roads and strayed into a valley, from where he only escaped as day dawned. He saw every sign of a fight and a victory for Wei, but he could not discover where his son had gone. So he returned without fighting. The Wei army pursued, and Wen Qin escaped toward Shouchun.

Now Yin Da-mu used to be a confidant of Cao Shuang’s. After his patron was murdered he came to serve under Sima Shi, but had been watching for a chance to slay him to avenge Cao Shuang. He was also a good friend of Wen Qin’s. Seeing that Sima Shi was seriously ill, he went in to see the sick general and said, “Wen Qin had no intention to rebel, but was led astray by Guanqiu Jian. If you let me go and speak with him he will come over to you at once.”

Sima Shi agreed, and Yin Da-mu put on his helmet and armor and rode after Wen Qin. By and by he got near enough to shout.

"Don't you recognize me? I'm Yin Da-mu."

Wen Qin stopped and looked back. Yin Da-mu took off his helmet and said, "Governor Wen, why don't you wait for a few more days?"

He tried to detain Wen Qin because he knew Sima Shi was very close to death, but Wen Qin did not understand. He abused Yin Da-mu and even intended to shoot his former friend. Weeping bitterly, Yin Da-mu turned back.

When Wen Qin reached Shouchun he found it already occupied by the Wei army. Then he tried to return to Xiangcheng, but three enemy forces arrived and the city was besieged. As the situation became more desperate, he decided to desert to Wu.

Guanqiu Jian, then behind the walls of Xiangcheng, heard about the fall of Shouchun, the defeat of Wen Qin, and the siege of his city from three enemy troops. He mustered all the forces in the city and marched out to face his foes.

As he went forth he encountered Deng Ai. He bade an officer to fight, but the man fell dead after the first encounter. Then Deng Ai and his men came on in force. Guanqiu Jian fought with all his strength, but his army was thrown into confusion. Then the other two troops also came up, and he was unable to withstand their combined attack. With a dozen followers he fled from the field and made for the town of Shen. Here the

magistrate received him kindly and comforted him with a feast. At the banquet Guanqiu Jian was given too much wine and became completely drunk. Then he was slain by his host and his head offered to the Wei army. Thus ended the uprising in Huainan.

Sima Shi was confined to his bed, ill. He called Zhuge Dan to his tent and gave him the seal of command and conferred upon him the title of General–Conqueror of the East, with authority over all the forces in Yangzhou. Soon after, the army marched back to Xuchang.

The sick man suffered from severe pain in his eyes and at the same time he began to have visions. Night after night he was troubled by the apparitions of the three courtiers he had cruelly put to death, and he knew that his end was near. He sent for his brother, who came and wept by his bed while he listened to the ruler's last commands.

"The responsibility of power is heavy," said Sima Shi. "Though I would like to step down, it is not possible. You are to succeed me—and remember, never trust anyone else with important affairs, or you may bring the disaster of the destruction of our whole clan."

Then he handed the seal of office to Sima Zhao as tears rolled down his face. Sima Zhao hastened to ask some final questions, but his brother let out a heart-rending cry as his damaged eye fell out and he died. It was the second month of the second year of the period Zheng Yuan.

Sima Zhao put on mourning for his brother and informed the Emperor of his death. By special edict the Emperor ordered

Sima Zhao to remain at Xuchang so as to guard against any attack from Wu. This order was unwelcome to its recipient, but he hesitated as to what to do.

Zhong Hui said, “The general has died only recently and the popular sentiment is hard to predict. What if some shifting of power takes place at the capital while you are here? It will be too late to regret.”

Taking his advice, Sima Zhao left Xuchang and camped on the Luo River. This move alarmed the Emperor. Then Wang Su advised him to placate Sima Zhao with new titles and honors. The Emperor consented and he sent Wang Su to take an edict to Sima Zhao, creating him Commander of Armed Forces and giving him full authority to control various ministries. He came to Luoyang to thank the Emperor for these honors and hencefor-ward all matters of the government were in his hand.

When news of these developments reached the Shu capital, Jiang Wei again petitioned for an expedition. “Sima Shi is dead and his brother has just gained power. He will not dare to leave Luoyang until he has consolidated his position. I pray your Majesty will permit me to take this opportunity to attack Wei so as to recover the northern territory.”

The Emperor agreed and Jiang Wei went to Hanzhong to prepare.

However, Zhang Yi tried to dissuade him, saying, “Our land is small and narrow and lacks the kind of resources for long expeditions. It’s better to firmly guard the strategic points on

our borders, rest the army, and care for the people. That is the way to protect our state."

"You're mistaken," said Jiang Wei. "Before our late prime minister left his cottage, he had already envisaged the division of the empire into three kingdoms, but he led six expeditions to try to recover the northern land. Unfortunately he died leaving his design unaccomplished. But he bequeathed to me the legacy of this mission and I must carry on his unfinished task and devote myself to the country to be worthy of his trust. Even if I die in the attempt, I will perish without regret. Now Wei is in an unstable condition and if we miss the opportunity, when are we going to find another?"

"You're right, General," agreed Xiahou Ba. "We can first send some light cavalry to Fuhan from where to capture Nanan west of the Tao River. If that is taken, the whole district will be ours."

Zhang Yi said, "We failed in the past because we delayed. The Art of War says, 'Strike where the enemy is unprepared and appear where the enemy does not expect you.' A speedy march and a sudden blow will take the Wei army by surprise—we will succeed this time."

So Jiang Wei led 50,000 men out through Fuhan. When he reached the Tao River, spies of Wei reported his arrival to their chiefs. Wang Jing, governor of Yongzhou, at once raised an army of 70,000 to fight him. Jiang Wei gave certain instructions to Zhang Yi and Xiahou Ba, and after they had departed to carry them out, he drew up the main body, with the Tao River behind.

Wang Jing rode out to parley. “The three kingdoms are now securely established—why do you repeatedly invade our borders?”

Jiang Wei replied, “Sima Shi deposed your late Emperor without cause. And it behoves a neighboring country to punish such a crime, let alone an enemy country.”

Turning to four of his officers, Wang Jing said, “You see, Jiang Wei has drawn up his men with the river at their back so they must conquer or drown. Jiang Wei is bold, but you four go and fight him—and pursue if he retreats.”

The four rode out from two sides to fight with Jiang Wei, who stood up to only a few encounters and then turned back toward his own lines. At this, Wang Jing pressed on with his main body to smite him. Jiang Wei led his men toward the river. As they drew near the water, Jiang Wei shouted, “Danger is imminent, officers! Now do your utmost!”

Encouraged by his words, his officers turned on the foe and fought with such vigor that the Wei army was worsted. And, as the soldiers fled, Zhang Yi and Xiahou Ba fell upon their rear. The Wei army was completely trapped. In a splendid display of his prowess, Jiang Wei plunged into the Wei army and slashed left and right, throwing them into utter confusion. They trod each other down in their haste, and many fell into the river. The slaughter was tremendous and dead bodies lay about for several li. Wang Jing and several hundred followers got clear and fled to Didao, where they entered and closed the gates.

After Jiang Wei had rewarded and feasted his army, he decided to attack the city.

Zhang Yi again tried to dissuade him: “General, you have won a great victory and your fame is widespread. This is the time to stop. If not, things may not go as well, and it will be like ‘adding legs to your sketch of a snake’.”*

“No, I don’t think so,” said Jiang Wei. “In the past when our campaign failed we still desired to advance and conquer the north. This time the battle at the Tao River has broken the spirit of our opponents, and if we press forward I reckon we can easily take Didao. Don’t be so pessimistic.”

In spite of Zhang Yi’s repeated remonstrance, Jiang Wei decided to attack Didao.

At Yongzhou the Wei general Chen Tai was raising an army to avenge the defeat of Wang Jing when Deng Ai, Governor of Yanzhou, arrived with his force. Chen Tai welcomed him in, and Deng Ai told him that he had been sent by Sima Zhao to assist him. Chen Tai asked him what plan he had in mind.

Deng Ai replied, “After their victory at the Tao River, if they enlist the aid of the Qiang people to vie for the Guan and Long districts and also obtain the support of the four neighboring cities, it will be a disaster for us. But instead of that they now attempt to take Didao, which is too strongly fortified for them to overcome in a short time. They will only end up wasting their energy. Let’s deploy our forces along the Xiang Hills, and then advance and smite them. Then victory will be ours.”

“What an excellent plan!” cried Chen Tai.

Without delay Chen Tai chose twenty squads, each of fifty men, and ordered them to lie in ambush among the high hills and deep valleys to the southeast of Didao. Each squad was to move during the day but hide at night, carrying ensigns, drums, trumpets, and kindling material with them. When the enemy arrived, they were to beat drums and blow trumpets by day, while at night they were to raise fires and explode bombs to strike fear into the enemy. The twenty squads of men took the instructions and departed to wait for the men of Shu to come. Then Chen Tai and Deng Ai, each leading 20,000 men, also marched toward Didao.

In the meantime, Jiang Wei’s men had besieged Didao. For several days they tried in vain to storm the city from eight points, and Jiang Wei began to feel depressed, not knowing what other plan to employ. One evening scouts came galloping up to report the approach of two armies, led by Chen Tai and Deng Ai.

Disturbed by the reports, Jiang Wei called in Xiahou Ba for counsel.

Xiahou Ba said, “I have mentioned to you before, General, that Deng Ai has perfected his skills in the art of war and the knowledge of topography since he was but a young man. You will find him a tough enemy.”

“He has come from far away,” said Jiang Wei. “Let’s attack before he can get a foothold.”

So Zhang Yi was left to carry on with the siege of the city while Xiahou Ba set out to confront Chen Tai. Jiang Wei himself led his men to fight Deng Ai.

Before Jiang Wei had marched far, the stillness was broken by the roar of a bomb in the southeast, and at once there arose the rolling of drums and the blare of trumpets, followed by flames that shot up to the very sky. Jiang Wei rode forward to look and saw the ensigns of Wei all around.

Greatly startled, he cried, "I have fallen into Deng Ai's trap!"

He sent orders to his two colleagues, telling them to withdraw immediately from Didao. Thus the men of Shu all turned back toward Hanzhong. Jiang Wei, who was in the rear covering the retreat, could hear the rolling of drums behind him throughout. But the enemy never attacked, and it was only when he entered the Sword Pass that Jiang Wei found out the real truth about the sounds and fires in the twenty places. He collected his men and camped in Zhongti.

For his services and success at the Tao River, Jiang Wei was rewarded with the rank of Da-jiang-jun ("Grand General"). Jiang Wei accepted the honorable title and expressed his gratitude to the Emperor in a memorial. Then he began again to talk of an expedition against Wei.

Remember enough is as good as a feast,
Having sketched a good snake don't add legs to the beast;
And in fighting remember that others are bold,
And tigers have claws though their teeth may be old.

The outcome of the new expedition will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* A Chinese idiom describing an unnecessary move that spoils everything.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN

Deng Ai Outwits Jiang Wei

Zhuge Dan Raises an Army to Destroy Sima Zhao

Jiang Wei retreated to camp at Zhongti, while the army of Wei camped outside Didao. Wang Jing welcomed Deng Ai and Chen Tai into the city and thanked them for lifting the siege. Banquets were given in their honor and rewards were distributed among the officers and men. Then he sent a memorial to Cao Mao, Emperor of Wei, eulogizing the magnificent services of Deng Ai, who was duly rewarded with the titles, General–Pacifier of the West and Xiao-yu (Commandant) of East Qiang, with the authority to supervise the defense there. He and Chen Tai were to place their men around Yongzhou and Liangzhou.

After Deng Ai had submitted a memorial to express his gratitude to the Emperor, Chen Tai hosted a feast to congratulate him for his promotion, during which he said, "Jiang Wei slipped off during the night. He has no more strength left and will never dare to return."

"I think he will," replied Deng Ai, smiling. "I can give you five reasons why he will."

"What are they?"

“Although the men of Shu have withdrawn, they possess the advantage of having scored a major victory, whereas we are actually weakened by our recent setback. This is the first reason why they will return. Secondly, their soldiers are veterans trained by Zhuge Liang and are mobile, whereas our officers are constantly transferred around and our men inadequately trained. Thirdly, they often advance by water whereas we proceed on land, so that while their army moves at leisure and the men arrive fresh, ours are fatigued with marching. Fourthly, Didao, Longxi, Nanan, and Qishan are all places to be defended; so we have to divide our forces when we want to strike away from these cities, whereas they can come down upon any of these four sites with their whole army. Lastly, if they come out by way of Longxi and Nanan, they have the grain of the Qiang to depend upon, and if they choose to move from Qishan, they have the wheat there to feed their army. For these five reasons they will surely return.”

The clear vision of his colleague left Chen Tai full of admiration. “Sir, with your miraculous understanding of our enemies, I don’t think we need have any anxieties about them.”

From then on these two became very good friends in spite of the difference in their ages. Deng Ai began training the army daily, and garrisons were placed at all points where surprise attacks seemed possible.

There was feasting also at the Shu camp in Zhongti, and the occasion was taken to discuss a new military campaign against Wei.

But one of those present objected. “General, your repeated expeditions have not won complete victories. Moreover, the battle at the Tao River has convinced the men of Wei of your superior strength. Why should you try again? If anything goes wrong, you will lose all you have gained.”

Jiang Wei replied, “All of you think only of Wei’s vast land and large population and the difficulty of conquering this at present, but you don’t see there are five reasons for our victory.”

The assembly asked him what these were.

“In the first place the fighting spirit of the Wei army has been badly broken on the Tao River, while that of ours, although we retreated, is un-dimmed, for we have not lost a single man. Secondly, our men advance in boats and so will not be wearied physically; but their men come by land and have to march to meet us. Thirdly, our men are thoroughly trained, while theirs are a mere flock of crows, quite undisciplined. Fourthly, when we go out through Qishan we can seize upon the autumn wheat for food. Finally, they have to divide their force to defend various points, while we can concentrate our strength to attack any one point, and so they will find it difficult to bring up reinforcements. So if we miss this chance, can we hope for a better one?”

Xiahou Ba tried to warn him of the ability of his opponent. “Deng Ai is young but he is deep and crafty. In his new rank as General–Pacificier of the West, he has certainly taken great pains to secure the districts under his charge. Things will not be as they were before.”

“Why should I fear him?” cried Jiang Wei angrily. “You people should not extol the enemy’s strength and belittle our own power. My mind is made up. We will take Longxi first.”

No one dared to voice any further opposition. Jiang Wei himself led the first division, while the others followed in due order. Thus the army left Zhongti for the Qishan Mountains.

Before they reached Qishan scouts reported that the Wei army had already established nine camps in the mountains. Incredulous, Jiang Wei ascended a high point to verify this, and, surely enough, he saw the nine Wei camps stretching over the mountains like a huge serpent, with the rear of each closely linked to the front of the next.

“Xiahou Ba did not exaggerate,” he said. “The planning of those camps is excellent. Only my mentor, Prime Minister Zhuge, could have laid them out so well. Deng Ai seems to be no inferior to him.”

Returning to his own army, he said to his officers, “As they are prepared they must have anticipated our coming, and I think Deng Ai is here, too. Now I want some of you to hold the mouth of the valley and encamp. You are to send out daily reconnaissance parties of about a hundred riders, showing my banner. Every time you go out use flags and uniforms of a different color—blue, yellow, red, white, and black—in turns. While you’re thus engaged in diverting their attention, I will lead the main army to slip out of Dongting to seize Nanan.”

So he ordered Bao Su to camp in the valley while the main army marched toward Nanan.

As soon as Deng Ai heard that the Shu army would come out at Qi shan, he camped there with his colleague, Chen Tai, to make preparations. But days passed without anyone coming to offer a challenge. Only scouts were seen riding out to reconnoiter five times a day, but these returned after advancing ten or fifteen li. Deng Ai climbed up a hill to look. After a careful examination he hastened into the tent to speak to his comrade.

"Jiang Wei is not here. He must have gone to take Nanan by way of Dongting. These same scouts have been going to and fro for days, changing only their uniforms. Their horses look quite spent and the leading officers are certainly not the ablest. Therefore, General, you can lead your men to attack them and their camp will be broken. After that, go and occupy the Dongting road so that Jiang Wei will be unable to retreat. I'm going first to relieve Nanan by way of the Wucheng Hill. If I occupy that high point, Jiang Wei will try to take Shanggui. Near that place is a narrow and precipitous valley called Duan Valley, just the place for an ambush, where I will have two troops lying in wait for him. When he comes to take the Wucheng Hill, he will certainly be defeated."

Chen Tai said, "I've been defending this region for over twenty years, yet I have never perceived so many of the military possibilities of the place as you do. Your calculations are wonderful. Please proceed with your plan and I will go and attack the enemy camp here."

So Deng Ai and his army set out by double marches to the Wucheng Hill, where they camped. As the Shu army had not yet arrived, he gave secret instructions to his son Deng Zhong

and another officer and sent them, each leading 5,000 men, to lie in wait in the Duan Valley.

In the meantime, Jiang Wei was marching from Dongting to Nanan. Near the hill he said to Xiahou Ba, “That is the Wucheng Hill. If we occupy that first we can gain a good vantage point over the city. But I fear that the artful Deng Ai must have already taken precautions to guard it.”

Just as he was worrying about this, there came the roar of a bomb from the hill, followed by the familiar sounds of war. Then flags and banners appeared, all of Wei, among which fluttered a yellow standard, bearing the name of Deng Ai. This was a great shock to the Shu army.

Almost at once veteran soldiers of Wei came rushing down from various points on the hill with such a momentum that the advance guard of Shu was badly mauled. Jiang Wei hurried to go to their help with his central force, but when he got near the soldiers of Wei had withdrawn.

Jiang Wei went to the foot of the hill and challenged, but the Wei army on the hill did not come down. The men of Shu began to hurl abuse at their enemy but they failed to provoke a fight. As the day waned Jiang Wei decided to retreat. At that moment, however, drums beat and horns blared furiously, yet still no troops descended the hill. Jiang Wei tried to ascend the hill, but its defenders hindered their advance uphill with a heavy discharge of stones. He held on till the third watch, when he again desired to pull out, but again there sounded the drums and horns.

Then he went down the hill to encamp, bidding his men build a barricade of wood and boulders. But amid resounding horns and drums, the men of Wei suddenly came down and disrupted the work. Chaos arose and the men of Shu retreated to their original camp.

The next day, Jiang Wei brought up many supply wagons to the hill and placed them in rows to form the nucleus of a camp to shelter his army. But in the night Deng Ai sent five hundred men, each carrying a torch, to come down from two sides and set fire to them. A melee ensued, which lasted till dawn. Thus the attempt to erect a camp failed again and the men of Shu retreated.

"It seems Nanan is hard to capture," said Jiang Wei to Xiahou Ba. "I think it's better to seize Shanggui, which is the storehouse of Nanan. If that is taken, Nanan ought to fall."

Leaving Xiahou Ba to camp by the hill, Jiang Wei led a force of veteran soldiers and bold officers toward Shanggui. They marched all night and by dawn they found themselves treading on dangerously rugged roads narrowly flanked by steep hills.

'What's this place?" Jiang Wei asked the guide, who told him that it was called Duan Valley.

"That is an ominous name!"* cried Jiang Wei in alarm. "It may mean 'Blocking the Valley.' And if a force blocked the mouth of the valley we would be in dire straits."

While he was hesitating whether to proceed or not, his scouts came to report that clouds of dust were spotted behind the

hills, which indicated an ambush. So he hastened to order retreat. But at that moment the two Wei troops under Deng Zhong and his colleague emerged to attack. Jiang Wei, alternately fighting and retreating, tried to get away. However, in front of him came thunderous shouting and Deng Ai himself appeared to reinforce his men, and the Shu army was sorely smitten by the joint attack of the three enemy forces. Fortunately Xiahou Ba arrived with an army and rescued Jiang Wei from the grave danger.

Jiang Wei desired to return to Qishan but Xiahou Ba said, "The camp there has been destroyed by Chen Tai. Bao Su was killed and the rest of the army has gone back to Hanzhong."

Jiang Wei dared not proceed through Dongting, but retreated by some unfrequented paths in the hills. Behind them Deng Ai pressed hard in pursuit. Jiang Wei told the others to move ahead while he himself covered the retreat. Suddenly Chen Tai dashed out from the hills. With a loud cry, his men pushed forward and surrounded Jiang Wei. By then, the Shu commander and his horse were extremely fatigued. Although he tried hard to thrust left and right, he failed to break through. At this critical moment Zhang Ni, who had heard of his predicament, came to his rescue with several hundred cavalrymen and Jiang Wei managed to struggle his way free. Zhang Ni saved his commander, but he himself lost his life to enemy arrows. Finally Jiang Wei returned to Hanzhong.

Grateful to Zhang Ni for his loyalty and bravery, and for devoting his life to the imperial cause, Jiang Wei petitioned the Emperor to honor his descendants.

Many blamed Jiang Wei for the loss of lives in the war. So, following the precedent of the late prime minister after the loss of Jieting, Jiang Wei memorialized that he should be degraded in rank and only act as the supreme commander.

The country being now cleared of the enemy, Chen Tai and Deng Ai gave a banquet to celebrate the victory and rewarded their men generously. Chen Tai submitted a memorial to the Emperor of Wei praising the services of Deng Ai, and a special commission gave him an even higher rank with the seal of office. His son was also promoted to marquis.

At this time the style of the reign in Wei was changed to Gan Lu (Sweet Dew). Sima Zhao assumed full command of all military forces in the country. Whenever he went out he was escorted by a guard of 3,000 mail-clad bold men and officers. He decided all state affairs at his own residence, without even consulting the Emperor. Plans for usurping the throne constantly occupied his thoughts.

One of his confidants, Jia Chong by name, son of Jia Kui, a high-ranking general of Wei, was then working as an advisor in Sima Zhao's house. He said to his master, "Sir, you have now very great power, but the hearts of the people are yet unknown. You should find out who your supporters are and gradually work toward your final goal."

Sima Zhao replied, "These have been my thoughts for a long time. You can be my emissary to the east to test the feeling there. Say that you are there to reward those who took part in the recent military campaign. That would be a good pretext."

Accordingly Jia Chong traveled to Huainan to see General Zhuge Dan, who was a cousin of Zhuge Liang. He had always been in the service of Wei but was given no important office while Zhuge Liang was alive. On his cousin's death his promotion was rapid. He was created Marquis of Gao ping, commanding the forces in Huainan.

On the pretext of rewarding the army for their services, Jia Chong went to see him. Zhuge Dan gave a banquet to entertain him. When host and guest were both mellow with wine, Jia Chong began to probe Zhuge Dan's sentiment toward his master.

He said provocatively, "Lately in Luoyang there has been much talk among the nobles about the weakness and lack of ability of the Emperor and his unfitness to rule. Now General Sima, whose family has served the country for three generations and whose own merits and virtue are high as the heavens, is the man best fitted to succeed the rule of Wei. I wonder what your esteemed view is."

But Zhuge Dan flared up in anger, "How could you utter such nonsense? You, who are the son of Governor Jia Kui, and your family always having enjoyed the bounty of Wei?"

Jia Chong tried to explain, "I am only repeating what others have said."

"If the court is threatened, I am ready to die to preserve it."

Jia Chong said no more. The following day he took his leave and went to tell his patron what Zhuge Dan had said.

“The rat!” cried Sima Zhao angrily. “How dare he?”

“He is exceedingly popular in Huainan,” said Jia Chong. “If he is left there too long he will do harm to you. You must destroy him at once.”

Sima Zhao began to take measures. On the one hand he wrote a secret letter to Yue Chen, governor of Yangzhou, and on the other sent a messenger with an edict to Zhuge Dan, summoning him to the capital to be in charge of construction work.

When he received the edict Zhuge Dan knew that he had been betrayed, and he interrogated the messenger, who confessed that Yue Chen knew all about the matter.

“How does he know?” asked Zhuge Dan.

“General Sima has sent him a secret letter.”

The messenger was condemned to death. Then Zhuge Dan placed himself at the head of his personal guard and hastened to Yangzhou. The city gates were closed and the drawbridge raised. He summoned the gate, but no one answered.

“How dare this fellow act like this?” he cried.

He ordered his men to force the gates. A dozen of his bold officers dismounted, crossed the moat and swiftly climbed up the wall, where they slew the guards and opened the gates. Zhuge Dan entered with his men and began to set the city to fire. Presently he went to the governor’s residence and Yue

Chen tried to seek refuge in a tower, but Zhuge Dan, sword in hand, went after him.

"Your father Yue Jin once received great kindness from the Wei court," rebuked Zhuge Dan. "Now instead of repaying your country you stoop to follow Sima Zhao."

Before Yue Chen could answer he was slain. Then Zhuge Dan prepared a memorial listing Sima Zhao's crimes, and had it sent to Luoyang. At the same time he made preparations for war, gathering troops and supplies. He mobilized all the soldiers stationed in the Huainan region, to the number of more than 100,000, and took over the 40,000 who had surrendered with the fall of Yangzhou. He also sent his advisor Wu Gang to the Kingdom of Wu to propose a joint action against Sima Zhao, offering his son Zhuge Jing as a hostage to indicate his good faith.

At this time Sun Jun had died and his brother, Sun Chen, was prime minister. Cruel and violent, he had put several important ministers to death on his way to power. The ruler of Wu, although no fool, was unable to do anything.

The messenger, Wu Gang, conducted the son of his master to the residence of Sun Chen, who asked him the reason for his visit.

Wu Gang said, "My master Zhuge Dan is a cousin of Zhuge Liang, the late prime minister of Shu. He has been in the service of Wei, but as he sees how Sima Zhao bullies the Emperor, deposes the ruler, and wields his power, he intends to raise an army to destroy the tyrant. As he fears that his military strength is not sufficient he has come to submit to

you. To show his good faith he has sent his son Zhuge Jing as a hostage. He entreats you to dispatch an army to assist him."

The request was received favorably, and Sun Chen sent five officers and 70,000 men to help Zhuge Dan, with Wen Qin as the guide. The army marched in three divisions. Wu Gang returned to report the success of his mission to Zhuge Dan, who was overjoyed and continued his war preparations.

Meanwhile, Zhuge Dan's memorial enraged Sima Zhao, who wished to command an army in person to annihilate him, but Jia Chong preached caution.

"My lord, you derived your power from your father and brother, and people across the country have not yet had the time to appreciate your virtue and your benevolence. If you leave the Emperor to go on this expedition and subversion happens while you are away, it will be too late to regret. Better request the Empress Dowager and the Son of Heaven to go with you, then nothing will go amiss."

Sima Zhao thought the plan excellent. He went into the palace and proposed it to Her Majesty, saying, "Zhuge Dan is in revolt. My colleagues and I have discussed the matter and we entreat Your Majesty and the Son of Heaven to accompany the expedition as the late Emperor would have done."

Too frightened to refuse, the Empress Dowager consented. The next day Sima Zhao requested the Emperor to embark on the expedition.

The Emperor said, “General, you command all the armies and can dispose of them as you will—why is it necessary for me to go?”

Sima Zhao replied, “Your Majesty is wrong to hesitate. In the past, Emperor Wu (Cao Cao) campaigned over the four seas and emperors Wen and Ming (Cao Pi and Cao Rui) had the ambition to conquer the whole empire and the determination to annex the eight wild regions. Wherever there was a major opponent they went in person to face him. Your Majesty should follow their example and sweep the land clean. Why fear?”

So the Emperor was also compelled to give consent. Sima Zhao then issued an edict mobilizing the combined forces in the two capitals, totaling 260,000. Wang Ji and Chen Qian, two distinguished generals, were in command of the van, while Shi Bao and Zhou Tai led the left and right units. The mighty army, escorting the imperial carriages, marched resolutely into Huainan like a great flood.

The Wu army went forth to meet the men of Wei, and both sides drew up for battle. Wang Ji rode out from the Wei side to challenge and Zhu Yi, the van leader of Wu, engaged him. At the third bout Zhu Yi fled in defeat. His colleague Tang Zi rode out but was also beaten in the third encounter. Wang Ji ordered the Wei army to press forward, and the men of Wu were thoroughly worsted. They retreated fifty li and camped. News of the setback was sent to Shouchun and Zhuge Dan, together with Wen Qin and his two sons, set out to fight Sima Zhao.

No sooner had they damped Wu's morale,
Than they saw Wei's gallant men advance.

Zhuge Dan's fate will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* The Chinese character Duan as a verb may mean "break," "block," or "broken" when used as an adjective.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE

Yu Quan Dies Nobly to Rescue Shouchun

Jiang Wei Fights Fiercely to Seize Changcheng

Hearing of this joint attack from Zhuge Dan and the men of Wu, Sima Zhao sought advice from two of his subordinates, Pei Xiu and Zhong Hui.

Zhong Hui said, "The Wu army is helping our enemy for the sake of profit, and hence we can entice them with some bait to win the battle."

Sima Zhao agreed and deployed his troops accordingly. First, he sent two officers to lay ambushes near Stone City* and another two major officers to stay in the rear with the veterans. Then he ordered a junior officer, Cheng Zu by name, to lead tens of thousands of men out to provoke the enemy into giving a battle. And lastly he told Chen Jun to load wagons, oxen, horses, donkeys, and mules with various articles as rewards for the army, and place them in the midst of the battlefield. All this stuff was intended to be abandoned when the enemy advanced, so as to tempt them to plunder.

On the day of battle Zhuge Dan, with Zhu Yi and Wen Qin on his two sides, looked across at his opponents and saw that the Wei army was in disarray. So he led on his men to attack in

full force. Cheng Zu at once retreated and Zhuge Dan went after him in hot pursuit. While chasing the enemy, his men noticed the large quantities of booty strewn all over the fields, so the men of Wu lost all desire to fight but scattered to gather the spoils.

Suddenly a bomb exploded and down came the two ambushing forces of Wei upon them. Alarmed, Zhuge Dan attempted to withdraw, but the two Wei generals also appeared with their forces of veterans, and he was sorely smitten. But worse was yet to come. At that moment Sima Zhao himself arrived with his army as reinforcements. Zhuge Dan fled into Shouchun, where he fortified himself. Then the Wei army laid a siege to the city. The army of Wu retreated into Anfeng. The ruler of Wei was lodging at this time in Xiangcheng.

Zhong Hui offered more advice to Sima Zhao. “Despite his defeat, Zhuge Dan still has plenty of grain and fodder in the city of Shouchun and his allies, the men of Wu, are stationed nearby to support him. His position is strong. Our soldiers are now besieging the city. If we slacken our efforts they will hold out for a long time, and if we press on with the attack they will make a desperate sortie. The men of Wu may also fall upon us at the same time, and it would be to our disadvantage. Therefore I advise that the attack be made only on three sides, leaving the south gate open for them to flee. If they do, we can fall on them and gain a complete victory. The men of Wu, having come from afar, cannot have supplies for very long, and we can send some light cavalry to get round and attack their rear. They will retreat without a fight.”

“You are indeed my best strategist!” said Sima Zhao, stroking the back of his advisor.

So Wang Ji, who was besieging the city from the south, was ordered to withdraw.

In the Wu camp at Anfeng, Sun Chen was very angry at the defeat. He said to Zhu Yi, “If you cannot even relieve the siege of a single city of Shouchun, how can you ever hope to overrun the north? Another failure and I will put you to death!”

The threatened officer went back to his camp to discuss the situation with his colleagues. Yu Quan said, “The south gate is free. Let me lead a troop out from there to help Zhuge Dan defend the city. Then you go and challenge the Wei army, and I will rush out from the city to support you. Our joint attack will destroy the Wei army.”

Zhu Yi thought the plan good. Three other officers were also willing to go into the city and participate in the attack. They were allowed to march into the city from the south gate without interference, since the Wei officers had no orders to stop them.

When this was reported to Sima Zhao, he said, “They are trying to collaborate with Zhu Yi to defeat our army by attacking from both the front and the rear.”

So he summoned two of his officers, Wang Ji and Chen Qian, and told them to take 5,000 men to block Zhu Yi’s way to the city and strike him in the rear. The two took the order and left.

Now Zhu Yi was advancing toward the city when he heard a shouting in the rear, and soon he was attacked by Wang Ji on the left and Chen Qian on the right. His army was worsted and he had to return to Anfeng. When Sun Chen heard of this new defeat he was furious.

"What is the use of officers like you, who always lose?" he cried.

He put the poor man to death. Then he upbraided Quan Yi, son of Quan Duan: "If you do not drive off this army of Wei let me never again see your face, nor that of your father."

Then Sun Chen returned to the capital of Wu.

When his departure was known in the Wei camp, Zhong Hui said to his chief: "Now that Sun Chen has left, the city of Shouchun has no hope of support from outside. This is our moment to attack it."

A vigorous assault began. Quan Yi wanted to break the siege, but when he saw how strong the Wei army was he realized there was no hope of success. So he surrendered to Sima Zhao, who received him well and gave him the rank of a junior general.

Grateful for this kindness, Quan Yi wrote to his father and uncle inside the city, telling them how brutal Sun Chen was and urging them to follow his example. He tied the letter to an arrow and shot it over the walls. His uncle picked up the letter and so the two elder Quans, with several thousand followers, went out and yielded to Wei.

Within the city Zhuge Dan was distressed. Two advisors came to him to urge him to give battle, since food in the city was short. He turned on them angrily.

"I want to defend, yet you talk about going forth? Are you trying to betray me? If you say that again you will die."

"He's going to perish," they said, sighing deeply as they cast their eyes heavenward. "We'd better surrender or we'll die, too."

At about the second watch that night they slipped over the wall and surrendered. Both were given important posts. Of those left in the city some were also for fighting, but they dared not say so.

Meanwhile, Zhuge Dan saw the Wei soldiers building walls all around their camp to take precautions against the possible flooding of the Huai River. So he anxiously waited for the river to rise and submerge the enemy's clay walls. If that happened he would be able to smite Sima Zhao. However, from autumn to winter, the weather was unusually dry and there was no flood.

Within the city food diminished rapidly, and soon starvation stared them in the face. Wen Qin and his sons were defending the citadel. As his soldiers were falling one by one for lack of food, Wen Qin went to see Zhuge Dan and proposed sending out the northern men to save food. His suggestion brought forth an outburst of fierce wrath.

"Do you want to kill me by proposing to send my men away?"

He ordered Wen Qin to be put to death. When they saw their father slain, his two sons ran amok with rage. Drawing their daggers, they at once slew dozens of guards, then flew over the wall to desert to Wei.

However, Sima Zhao had not forgotten that one of the two, Wen Yang, had pinned down his whole army single-handedly. At first he wanted to put him to death, but his advisor Zhong Hui interposed.

"The real offender was his father," said Zhong Hui, "but he is dead. Now these two have come to you in desperation. If you slay those who come to surrender, you will only harden the will of those inside to defend the city."

Sima Zhao saw reason in this, and so their submission was accepted. They were led to Sima Zhao's tent, and he soothed them with kind words, gave them sturdy horses and fine robes, and employed them as lieutenant generals. They were even created marquises. After expressing their gratitude, they rode about the city on the horses he had given them, shouting: "The great commander has not only pardoned us but conferred on us noble ranks. Why don't you all yield?"

When those inside the city heard this they said to each other, "Wen Yang used to be an enemy of Sima Zhao's, and yet he has been well received—how much more may we expect generous treatment!"

The desire to surrender possessed them all. When Zhuge Dan learned about this he was incensed, and went round the posts night and day trying to enforce his authority through punishment of death.

Zhong Hui calculated that Zhuge Dan had lost the support of his men. He went to Sima Zhao and said, “This is the time to seize the city.”

Sima Zhao was only too pleased. He exhorted his whole army to storm the walls all at once. Then an officer in the city treacherously opened the north gate and let in the Wei soldiers. When Zhuge Dan heard that the enemy had entered the city, he hurriedly called together several hundred guards and tried to escape along some byroads to the gate. But at the drawbridge he met the Wei officer Hu Zun, who raised his sword and cut Zhuge Dan down. His followers were all captured.

Wang Ji led his men to the west gate, where he encountered the Wu officer, Yu Quan.

“Why don’t you yield?” shouted Wang Ji.

Yu Quan replied, “I received orders to rescue those in danger. Although I have failed in my effort, I deem it dishonorable to surrender to the enemy.” Then throwing off his helmet, he cried, “Lucky is the man who can die on the battlefield.”

Whirling his sword about, he fought his foe for more than thirty bouts. In the end, both he and his horse being exhausted, he fell beneath the swords of enemy soldiers.

Sima’s men besieged Shouchun years ago
Many bowed their heads in the dust to yield.
The land of Wu has produced its heroes,
Yet only Yu Quan would his life devote.

When Sima Zhao entered the city he put to death three generations of Zhuge Dan's clan. Several hundred of his followers were captured and brought before Sima Zhao, who offered them their lives if they would yield.

"No, we will never surrender to you!" they all shouted. "We will die with General Zhuge."

Enraged, Sima Zhao had them tied up and taken outside the city to be executed. Before the execution, each one in turn was asked: "Will you submit and be spared of your life?" But each one in turn refused to yield and was beheaded. And they all died. Sighing deeply in admiration for their loyalty, Sima Zhao had them properly buried.

Loyal servants flee not in times of danger;
Such were Zhuge's men who followed him to the shades.
The Song of Dirge still rang out loud.
Faithful unto death were they, even as Tian Heng's men.*

Many of the men of Wu surrendered. One advisor said to Sima Zhao, "The families of these men are all in the southeast along the Yangtze and Huai rivers, and if you keep them alive they will rebel in the end. It is better to bury all of them now."

But Zhong Hui objected: "No. When the ancients made war with an enemy country their aim was to conquer both its land and its people and so they only put to death the originators of trouble. It would be inhuman to bury them all. Better let them return home to show how generous our state is."

"This is better advice," agreed Sima Zhao.

So the men of Wu were released and allowed to return home. Tang Zi, a Wu officer, dared not return to his own place for fear of the cruel Sun Chen, so he surrendered to Wei and was well treated. All the Wu officers who had submitted were given posts in the districts along the three rivers.

Since the uprising in Huainan was suppressed, Sima Zhao decided to withdraw his army. Just then, news came that Jiang Wei had gone to capture Changcheng and was interfering with their supply lines. Startled, Sima Zhao hastened to call a council to discuss ways to deal with this new menace.

Meanwhile, in Shu the reign title was changed to Jing Yao. Jiang Wei picked out two local officers, Jiang Shu and Fu Qian, to train the army. These two were bold officers and Jiang Wei was very fond of them.

Around this time, there came the news that Zhuge Dan had raised an army to destroy Sima Zhao and had obtained the support and help of Wu; and that Sima Zhao had mobilized the forces in the two Wei capitals to go on an expedition against Zhuge Dan, taking with him the Emperor and Empress Dowager.

Jiang Wei was thrilled to hear the news. “I’m going to succeed this time!” he cried exultantly. And he petitioned the Emperor, requesting to make another expedition against Wei.

But when Qiao Zhou heard of this new expedition he sighed with grief. He said to himself, “The Emperor indulges himself in drinking and in lust, and trusts that eunuch, Huang Hao. He neglects state affairs and is only interested in seeking pleasure. And Jiang Wei constantly desires to launch

expeditions, without caring for his men. The country is in danger of falling."

He then wrote an essay "On State Injuries," which he sent to Jiang Wei.

"One asks, 'By what means did the weak overcome the strong in past times?' The answer is that the ruler of a strong and carefree state usually neglected its people, while that of a weak and careworn state always showed compassion for its people. Trouble followed upon neglect and efficiency grew out of compassion, which is a universal truth. Therefore, King Wen of Zhou Dynasty, who devoted himself to the welfare of his people, defeated the multitudes of a strong state with a small army; King Gou Jian of the Kingdom of Yue, who cared for his men, overcame a powerful opponent with a weak force. These were their methods.

"But one could argue: In the past when Chu was strong and Han weak, the two sides agreed to divide the country at Hong Canal. Yet Zhang Liang, knowing that once the people's minds were settled it would be difficult to take action again, went in pursuit of Xiang Yu and finally destroyed him. So why is it necessary to follow the examples of King Wen and Gou Jian?

"The answer is, in the days of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, feudal lords enjoyed permanent privileges and the relations between the ruler and his officials were firmly established. Even if the founder of Han lived at that time he could not have seized the empire by force. In the Qin Dynasty the practice of the investment of feudal lords was abolished and districts were governed by officials. Then the people, tired of

the numerous taxes, rose to revolt. The empire was riven asunder and there followed a time of contention, when every bold man strove to build his own realm.

"But we are now in other times. There is no such seething chaos that marked the last days of Qin, but rather a state of things similar to that of the period when six kingdoms shared one empire. Therefore one can be King Wen, but not the founder of Han. Act when time is favorable, and start an expedition when success is predestined. The armies of Tang and Wu fought but one battle and won because they had compassion for the people and waited for the opportune time. If wars are constant, and a mishap occurs, even the wisest will be unable to see the safest way."

After reading the article Jiang Wei cried wrathfully, "The words of a rotten pedant?" And he dashed the article to the ground in contempt.

So the remonstrance was disregarded, and the army was ready to march against Wei.

Before setting out he asked Fu Qian, "In your opinion, where should we head for?"

Fu Qian replied, "The grain and forage of Wei are stored at Changcheng. Let us go out by Luo Valley and cross the Shen Ridge to get to Changcheng. First burn their supplies and then move on to Qinchuan. And the conquest of Wei will be a matter of days."

"Your view fits in with my plan," Jiang Wei told him.

So the army advanced along this route toward Changcheng. The commander of the city was Sima Wang, a distant cousin of Sima Zhao. In the city was a large quantity of grain, but only a small army. When he heard of the impending invasion, Sima Wang hurriedly consulted his two officers and led his weak force out to encamp some twenty li from the city.

The next day the Shu army arrived. Sima Wang and his two officers went forth to meet them. Jiang Wei rode out and said, "Sima Zhao has forced your Emperor to move into his army camp, which plainly indicates that he intends to follow the path of Li Jue and Guo Si. My lord has commanded me to punish this crime. Yield at once! If you persist in erring, your family will all be put to death."

Sima Wang shouted back, "You and yours are impudent enough to repeatedly invade a superior state. Withdraw at once or else none of your men will return alive!"

Before he finished his words one of his officers rode out, his spear set ready to thrust. From the Shu army came Fu Qian to take the challenge, and the two engaged. After less than ten encounters Fu Qian tempted his opponent by feigning a weakness. His opponent thrust hard at the opening but Fu Qian evaded the blow, pulled him out of the saddle, and carried him off toward his own side.

This infuriated the Wei officer's colleague, who went to his rescue. Brandishing his sword, he went pounding after Fu Qian. Knowing he was chased, Fu Qian proceeded slowly, thus luring his enemy closer. When he was near enough, Fu Qian suddenly dashed his prisoner with all his strength to the earth, secretly laid his hand on his four-edged iron bar, and

smote his pursuer full in the face. The blow knocked out an eye, and the poor man fell dead. The other officer was killed by Shu soldiers as he lay on the ground. At this Jiang Wei urged his men forward. Sima Wang abandoned his camp and fled into the city, closing the gates behind him.

Jiang Wei told his men to rest for the night to regain their strength and seize the city on the morrow.

At dawn the next day the assault began. The men, fresh from their rest, vied with each other to reach the city first. They shot fire-arrows and fire-bombs into the city. Instantly all the straw huts inside were in flames and the men of Wei were in turmoil. Then Jiang Wei ordered his men to pile brushwood against the wall and set it alight. The flames rose high into the sky. The city was on the brink of destruction and the wailing of the Wei soldiers inside the walls could be heard across the fields.

Suddenly a great shout diverted the attention of the attackers from the city. Jiang Wei turned round and saw a troop of Wei soldiers marching up, beating drums and waving banners. Switching his rearmost unit with the vanguard, he took his place beneath the great standard. Looking across he saw a young officer, fully armored, riding ahead with his spear ready to thrust. He looked a little over twenty years of age, with a fair complexion and rich red lips.

“Do you recognize General Deng?” he cried fiercely.

“So this is Deng Ai,” thought Jiang Wei. He set his spear and rode out. They fought for about thirty or forty bouts, but

neither could claim advantage over the other. The youth wielded his spear with perfect skill.

“If I don’t employ some ruse, how will I win?” Jiang Wei thought to himself.

So he turned to a mountain path on his left. The youth followed closely. Jiang Wei, hanging up his spear, quietly reached for his carved bow and arrow, and shot. But the young man was sharp-eyed, and as the bowstring sang he lunged forward and the arrow swished harmlessly by.

Glancing back, Jiang Wei saw his pursuer close upon him, and his spear was already threatening his life. Jiang Wei ducked and the spear missed. As it slipped past his ribs, Jiang Wei caught it firmly under his arm. The young man abandoned his weapon and made for his own ranks.

“What a great pity!” sighed Jiang Wei as he turned to pursue.

He followed the youth to the front of the Wei line, from which emerged a warrior holding his sword. “Jiang Wei, do not pursue my son!” he cried. “Deng Ai is here!”

Taken aback, Jiang Wei realized that he had only been contending with the son of his real opponent and in his heart he admired the youth for his skill. He desired to fight with Deng Ai but he feared lest his steed was too weary to stand the contest.

So he pointed to Deng Ai, “Today I have met you and your son. Let us both draw off our men for the present. We will fight a decisive battle tomorrow.”

Seeing that the battlefield was ill-suited for him, Deng Ai agreed to wait. Reining in his horse he said, “All right. Let us lead off our men, and whoever attempts to take any secret advantage is a base fellow.”

Both sides retreated. Deng Ai camped on the bank of the Wei River and Jiang Wei across two hills. As he saw that the men of Shu had the advantage of position, Deng Ai wrote to Sima Wang, “We must not give battle in any case, but wait until reinforcements come from inside the passes. By then the enemy will have run out of supplies and we can defeat them with an attack on three sides. In the meantime, I’m sending my son Deng Zhong to help you defend the city.”

He also dispatched a messenger to ask for further help from Sima Zhao.

Jiang Wei sent his man to the Wei camp to deliver a challenge for battle the next day. Deng Ai feigned acceptance, but when morning came and Jiang Wei had deployed his men, his enemy did not appear. Nor was there any sign of occupation in his camp, no display of flags or rolling of drums all day. At nightfall, the army of Shu returned to camp and Jiang Wei sent another challenge, reproaching his opponent for failing to keep his word. Deng Ai treated the messenger with wine and food and invented an excuse of indisposition. Then he promised to come to fight the next day.

But the same thing happened on the following day. Jiang Wei led his army out but Deng Ai again was nowhere to be seen. And this went on for five or six times.

Fu Qian warned his chief: “There must be some trick afoot. We must be on our guard.”

“They are certainly waiting for reinforcements to come, so that they may attack us on three sides,” said Jiang Wei. “I will write to Wu and ask Sun Chen to join forces with me.”

Just then, mounted scouts brought news of the rout of the army of Wu, of the fall of Shouchun, and the death of Zhuge Dan. Moreover, Sima Zhao had led his army back to Luoyang and would soon come to rescue Changcheng.

“This campaign is hopeless again!” said Jiang Wei bitterly. “We’d better withdraw.”

Four times he missed! he hailed
The fifth occasion joyfully, and failed.

Jiang Wei’s plan of withdrawal will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Capital of Wu, and modern Nanjing.

* Tian Heng (?–202 B.C.), a lord in the kingdom of Qi, who escaped to an island after he was defeated by Han. Later he was summoned by the founder of Han to go to Luoyang. Unwilling to submit, he committed suicide on the way; when news of his death reached his five hundred followers on the island, they also killed themselves.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN

Ding Feng Designs a Plan to Slay Sun Chen

Jiang Wei Defeats Deng Ai in a Contest of Battle Formations

As was said in the previous chapter, Jiang Wei decided to pull out his army from Changcheng for fear of the approach of Wei reinforcements. He sent the infantry and the baggage away first, and kept the cavalry to cover the retreat.

Spies reported his movements to Deng Ai, who said gleefully, "He has gone because he knew our commander's army would soon be upon him. Let him go, and don't follow. If we pursue we will fall into his snare."

Scouts were sent to reconnoiter, and when they returned they reported that kindling material had been piled up in some narrow parts of Luo Valley to check any pursuit with fire. The officers praised the prevision of their leader. Then Deng Ai sent a memorial to court to report the whole event. Sima Zhao, greatly pleased, rewarded Deng Ai with more gifts.

The commander of Wu, greatly angered by the desertion of so many of his men and officers to Wei, put all the families of the deserters to death. The ruler of Wu, Sun Liang, then only sixteen, disapproved of this act of cruelty.

The young Emperor was of an ingenious turn of mind, as can be seen from the following story. One day in the west garden, he told a eunuch to go and get some honey, since he wanted to try some green plums. The honey was brought, but there were bits of mouse droppings in it. The young Emperor called the storekeeper and blamed him for carelessness.

The storekeeper bowed to the ground and said in protest, "I kept the honey sealed air tight. How could there be such dirt in it?"

"Has the eunuch asked you for honey lately?" asked the Emperor.

"He did ask me for some a few days ago, but I refused him."

The Emperor pointed at the eunuch and said, "You must have defiled the honey intentionally to incriminate him because you were angry that he earlier refused you the honey."

The eunuch denied the charge.

"It is very easy to tell," said the Emperor. "If the dirt has been in the honey for some time it will be soft all through, but if it is newly planted it will be dry inside."

He ordered an attendant to break off a lump and it was quite dry inside. The eunuch had to plead guilty.

This episode showed that the Emperor was quick-witted. But clever as he was, he had no control over his country, for Sun Chen dominated the government and had placed his brothers in command of all the garrisons and armies.

One day the young Emperor sat musing over his sorrows. Standing at his side was Quan Ji, brother of the Empress.

Weeping, the Emperor said to his brother-in-law: "Sun Chen holds all real power and kills people as he wishes. He has humiliated me too much. Something must be done or else he will do even greater harm in future."

Quan Ji said, "I will suffer any sacrifices to do whatever Your Majesty commands me to do."

"Muster the Imperial Guards without delay and hold all the city gates with General Liu Cheng. I myself will go out to slay that ruffian. But remember, you must not let your mother know about this, for she is Sun Chen's elder sister. Any leaking of our plan and I would be ruined."

"Will Your Majesty give me an edict that I may show it to all when the moment of action comes?" requested Quan Ji. "That will hold back Sun Chen's supporters."

Then the secret edict was drafted and given to Quan Ji, who went home and confided the plan to his father, Quan Shang. His father told his wife that Sun Chen would surely be eliminated in three days.

"Serves him right," she said.

However, although she approved with her tongue, she sent a secret messenger with a letter to tell her brother, Sun Chen, about it. In wrath Sun Chen called in his four brothers that very night and surrounded the palace with his best troops. At the same time he seized Liu Cheng and Quan Shang and all

the members of their families. At daybreak the young Emperor was disturbed by a commotion outside the palace. Then attendants hurried in and told him that the palace was surrounded by Sun Chen's troops.

The Emperor knew that he had been betrayed. He angrily turned on the Empress, who was daughter of Quan Shang, and reproached her. "Your father and brother have upset my plan."

Drawing his sword, he wanted to go out and face his foe but the Empress and the attendants clung to his robe, weeping, and held him back.

After putting to death Liu Cheng, Quan Shang and the others, Sun Chen assembled all the courtiers, civil and military, and said to them: "The Emperor is given to lust and weak in health. He is unfit to inherit the throne and therefore he must be deposed. Anyone of you who dares to oppose me will be punished for treason."

Intimidated, all complied except one man, Huan Yi, who cried indignantly, "How dare you utter such nonsense? Our Emperor is very intelligent—I would rather die than accept your order."

Sun Chen drew his sword and killed the bold official. Then he went into the palace and reviled at the Emperor, "Depraved and stupid king! Death would be the only fitting punishment for you to appease the whole country, but out of consideration for the late Emperor you are to be degraded to the rank of Prince of Kuaiji. I will select a worthy person to succeed you on the throne."

So saying, he ordered an official to snatch the imperial seal from the young Emperor, which was then kept in Deng Cheng's care. The deposed Emperor wept bitterly as he departed.

The sage example of the wise Yi Yin
Perverted now to traitor's use we see;
And Huo Guang's faithful services are made
A cloak to cover vilest treachery.
Oh pity this clever young prince,
Who was stripped of his throne.

Then Sun Chen sent Sun Kai, who was of the imperial house, and Dong Chao to Hulin to request Sun Xiu, sixth son of Sun Quan and Prince of Langya, to ascend the throne.

Sun Xiu had had some premonition of the supreme honor he was going to receive. On the previous night he dreamed of ascending the skies seated on a dragon, but when he glanced back he could not see the dragon's tail. He woke up in a fright, and the next day the messengers came to call him to the capital. So he set out.

At Qua his carriage was stopped by a venerable old man, who gave his name as Gan Xiu. The man bowed to him and said, "Delay will cause trouble, and I pray Your Highness will make haste."

Sun Xiu thanked the old man. Then he arrived at Busai Pavilion, where an official awaited him with a royal chariot, but Sun Xiu's modesty would not allow him to mount. He remained in his own simple carriage and traveled thus to the capital. Officials lined the road to bow to him, and he hastily

dismounted to return their salutes. Then Sun Chen stood forth and ordered his men to help the newly-elected Emperor to his feet and lead him into the Audience Hall, where, he was asked to take the seat of the throne and assume the supreme honor of the Son of Heaven. After thrice modestly declining the honor, Sun Xiu at last took his seat and received the jade seal of the Emperor.

When all the officials had made their obeisance, there followed the usual amnesty to all offenders, promotions, honors, and the change of reign title. Yong An, or Eternal Peace, was the name of the new reign. Sun Chen was confirmed as prime minister, with the governorship of Jingzhou. Moreover, Sun Hao, the son of his elder brother, was created Marquis of Wucheng.

Sun Chen, with five marquisettes in his family and the whole Imperial Guard under his command, was the most powerful man in the kingdom. The new Emperor, sensing trouble, showed him great favor outwardly, yet inwardly kept a careful watch over him—the prime minister's arrogance knew no bounds.

In winter, in the twelfth month of the year, Sun Chen sent beef and wine to the Emperor, who declined them. Annoyed, he took these to General Zhang Bu's residence, where they drank the wine together. When he was quite intoxicated, Sun Chen blurted out, "When I deposed the present Prince of Kuaiji many people urged me to take the throne myself. But I thought this present Emperor was a man of virtue and so I set him up. Now he tries to mortify me by rejecting my presents. Sooner or later, you will see what I will do about this slight!"

Zhang Bu said nothing but nodded submissively. The next day he secretly went to the palace and told the Emperor, who was so terrified that he could not rest day and night. Several days later, Sun Chen appointed Meng Zong in command of 15,000 veterans and sent him to camp at Wu-chang. He emptied the state armory of all its weapons, which he also left in Meng Zong's care. Two generals, who learned about these moves, secretly warned the Emperor that a rebellion was in the making.

The Emperor, extremely alarmed, called in Zhang Bu for advice, who said, "The veteran general Ding Feng is a superior strategist and able to make decisions on matters of importance. Your Majesty should consult him."

So Ding Feng was summoned before the Emperor and confided Sun Chen's threatened revolt.

"Have no anxiety, Your Majesty," comforted Ding Feng. "I have a plan to rid the state of this evil."

The Emperor asked him what his plan was.

"Tomorrow is the day of winter sacrificial offerings, a good opportunity to assemble all the officials and so get Sun Chen to come to the banquet. I know what to do then."

The Emperor was delighted to hear this. It was decided that Ding Feng and two other officers were responsible for matters outside the palace, and Zhang Be saw to arrangements inside.

That night the wind roared furiously, sending sand and stone whirling in the air and uprooting old trees by the roots. By

daylight the wind had abated. Then the Emperor's envoys arrived at Sun Chen's house to invite him to a banquet in the palace. Sun Chen rose from his couch, and, as he did so, fell flat to the ground as though he had been pushed from behind. This incident annoyed him. Dozens of envoys came crowding around to escort him to the palace. As he was leaving home his family members begged him not to go to the banquet, reminding him of the ill omens of the wind in the night and his fall that morning.

Sun Chen said, "My brothers and I have full control of the palace guards. Who dares to come near me? If anything should go amiss, light a fire as a signal."

So he mounted the carriage and left for the palace. Seeing him, the Emperor hastened to rise from his place to welcome him to the seat of honor.

After several rounds of wine, some of the officials suddenly cried out in alarm, "There is a fire outside the palace!"

Sun Chen rose to go out, but the Emperor stopped him. "Do not be alarmed, sir. There are a lot of soldiers outside. What is there to fear?"

Hardly had he finished these words than Zhang Bu, his sword drawn, rushed into the banquet hall at the head of some thirty armed guards, shouting, "I hold an edict to slay the rebel Sun Chen."

Sun Chen made a desperate effort to flee but he was instantly seized by the armed guards. He fell prostrate before the

Emperor, bowing his head to the ground, pleading, “I desire to be exiled to my home village in Jiaozhou.”

“Did you exile any of your victims?” retorted the Emperor angrily.

So the order was given to execute him and Sun Chen was hustled to the east corner of the hall and put to death. All his former followers dared not stir. Then Zhang Bu proclaimed the Emperor’s edict that Sun Chen was the only culprit and no one else would be punished. This set their hearts at ease.

Zhang Bu requested the Emperor to ascend the Tower of the Five Phoenixes. Soon, Ding Feng and his two comrades brought forth Sun Chen’s four brothers and the Emperor condemned them all to death. After this their families were also slain, the total number of those killed being several hundred. Moreover, the tomb of his cousin Sun Jun was broken open and his corpse beheaded.

For the victims of the Sun brothers, including Zhuge Ke, Teng Yin, Lu Ju, Wang Chun, and their families, tombs were built to commend their loyalty. And those that had been exiled to distant lands were permitted to return home fully pardoned. Ding Feng and the others were handsomely rewarded.

News of this change of power was dispatched to Chengdu, and the Second Ruler of Shu sent an envoy to congratulate his ally on his success. In return Wu also sent an envoy, named Xue Xu, to the west. On his return the Emperor asked him about affairs in the west.

“These days the most powerful man in Shu is a eunuch named Huang Hao and most courtiers try to please him. Truthful words are not heard at their court, and the country people look sallow and starved. It is just as the saying goes, ‘Swallows and sparrows in the eaves know not that the building is about to be in flames.’”

“Alas! If only Prime Minister Zhuge were still alive—how different it all would be!” said the ruler of Wu, with a sigh.

Then he had another state letter drafted and sent to Shu, in which he pointed out that Sima Zhao undoubtedly intended usurpation, and when that happened he would invade both Wu and Shu to demonstrate his strength, so he urged his ally to be prepared against this.

On hearing about this, Jiang Wei again sought permission for another expedition against Wei. Consent being given, he took leave of the Second Ruler and marched his army of 200,000 men into Hanzhong, with Liao Hua and Zhang Yi as van leaders. Four officers commanded the two wings with another one in the rear, while Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba led the center column.

Asked what he thought should be their first objective, Xiahou Ba replied, “We can advance from Qishan, which is an ideal battleground. The late prime minister launched six expeditions from there because it is the only good exit.”

Jiang Wei approved and so the army marched to the Qishan Mountains, where they camped at the entrance to the valley.

At this time Deng Ai was also at his camp in the Qishan Mountains training the Longyou troops. Suddenly mounted scouts came to report of the coming of the western men and their establishment of three encampments at the mouth of the valley. Deng Ai ascended a hill to observe the enemy camps. What he saw pleased him greatly and he said to his men after returning, “They have done exactly as I foresaw.”

Now Deng Ai had carefully examined the “pulse” of the terrain and so had intentionally left some ground open for the Shu army to encamp, for he had excavated a tunnel from his camp to where he had anticipated his enemy would halt. He had been waiting for the Shu army to arrive so that he could put his plan to action. Jiang Wei had unwittingly placed his three camps at the entrance of the valley and the left camp had been pitched on the very tunnel. Wang Han and Jiang Bin were in command of the camp.

Deng Ai ordered his son and Shi Zuan, each with 10,000 men, to batter the Shu lefthand camp from two sides. He also sent another officer to take five hundred sappers to set out for the camp at the second watch by the secret tunnel, and emerge from under the ground behind the tent.

Meanwhile, the two commanders of the Shu left camp, wary of a surprise from their enemy, dared not take off their armor when they went to sleep as the newly-made camp was not yet well fortified. Suddenly, they were told of the turmoil in the center of the camp. They seized their weapons and rode forth. At that moment, however, Deng Zhong and his colleague had also arrived to attack from the front. The two Shu officers fought desperately to defend their position but were unable to

resist the enemy's raid from both within and without. They abandoned the left camp and fled.

From his tent Jiang Wei heard the commotion in the lefthand camp and quickly grasped the real situation. He mounted and deployed in front of the center camp.

"Whoever dares to stir without permission will die!" he shouted. "If the enemy comes, just shoot them down and say nothing."

The right camp was also ordered to hold its position. The defense proved effective. More than a dozen times the men of Wei charged forward, only to be driven back by arrows and bolts. Daylight found the Shu camps still firm, and Deng Ai drew off.

"Jiang Wei has indeed learned Zhuge Liang's art," said Deng Ai. "His men held out through the night without flinching, and his officers met the attack with composure. He is a real commander."

The next day the two commanders of the left camp collected together their defeated men. Then they went to the main camp, where they knelt down and admitted their fault, but Jiang Wei said, "It was not your fault but mine. I failed to understand the nature of the terrain."

He assigned to them more troops and told them to establish a camp. The bodies of the slain were buried in the underground passage. After that, a challenge to battle for the following day was sent to Deng Ai, who accepted it joyfully.

The next day the two armies were drawn up in front of the Qishan Mountains. Jiang Wei deployed his men in the "Eight Arrays" formation designed by Zhuge Liang, which are called Heaven, Earth, Wind, Cloud, Bird, Serpent, Dragon, and Tiger. While the maneuver was in progress, Deng Ai recognized the special formation and set his men accordingly.

Gripping his spear Jiang Wei rode out and cried out, "You have made a good imitation of my formation, but can you work the variations?"

"Do you think you alone hold the secret? Of course I know the variations."

Deng Ai re-entered his ranks, ordered the signal officers to wave the flags to the right and left, and there evolved sixty-four variations of the original array in rapid succession. This done, Deng Ai rode out to the front and asked, "What do you think of that?"

"Not too bad. Still, do you dare to attack my formation?"

"Why not?"

The two armies moved closer in orderly ranks. Deng Ai commanded from the center of his army. Then the clash came, but each army still maintained its own formation. Presently Jiang Wei waved his flag and all of a sudden his formation changed into one of "Serpent Coiling on the Ground." Deng Ai was trapped in the center. Shouts arose all about him. Not knowing what this new formation was, Deng Ai panicked. Step by step the men of Shu closed in upon him, and he and his officers saw no way of escape.

“Surrender, Deng Ai!” cried the Shu soldiers in chorus.

Lifting his face to Heaven, Deng Ai heaved a long sigh. “I was tempted by an impulse to demonstrate my skill and I have fallen into Jiang Wei’s trap.”

Suddenly, from the northwest a cohort dashed in. To Deng Ai’s great joy they were soldiers of Wei, and he took the opportunity to fight his way out. The officer who saved him was Sima Wang.

But although Deng Ai had been rescued, his nine camps in Qishan were all seized by the Shu army and he had to retreat to the south of the River Wei to pitch a new camp.

“How did you come to know that formation and help me out of it?” asked Deng Ai of his rescuer.

Sima Wang replied, “In my youth I traveled to the south of Jingzhou and was friendly with Cui Zhou-ping and Shi Guang-yuan.* They explained that formation to me. Today, Jiang Wei used what is known as “Serpent Coiling on the Ground,” and the only way to break it is to attack its head, which I saw was in the northwest section of his army. So I struck from there and the formation was broken.”

Deng Ai admitted, “Although I have studied this formation, I don’t really know the variations. But since you know about these we may be able to use them to recover our camps.”

“I fear the little I have learned won’t be enough to throw dust in Jiang Wei’s eyes.”

"Tomorrow you go and contend with him while I slip round behind Qishan and make a surprise attack on their rear. We will recover our camps in this way, I'm sure."

So a force was prepared, with himself in command, to smite the Shu army from the rear. At the same time a challenge was sent to the Shu camp for a contest of battle formations the next day. Jiang Wei accepted the challenge.

After sending away the Wei messenger, Jiang Wei said to his officers, "In the secret book that I received from our late prime minister the variations of this battle array are three hundred and sixty-five, corresponding to the days of the year. Now this challenge from them is like 'Displaying one's skill in carpentry in front of Lu Ban.'* But there must be some ruse behind this. Do you know what it is, gentlemen?"

Liao Hua replied, "Surely they try to engage our attention with this contest so that they may attack our rear."

"Exactly," said Jiang Wei, smiling.

So he prepared a counter move by sending Liao Hua and Zhang Yi to lead 10,000 soldiers to lie in wait behind the hills.

The next day all the men from the nine Shu camps were led out and drawn up in front of the hills. Sima Wang also marched his army to Qishan and presently rode to the front to parley.

Jiang Wei spoke first. "You have challenged me to a contest—now you go ahead first."

Sima Wang agreed and drew up his men in the Eight Arrays.

"This is the same as what I did yesterday," said Jiang Wei, laughing. "You are just copying mine. What is so wonderful about it?"

"But you also have copied from others," retorted his adversary.

"How many variations of this are there?" asked Jiang Wei.

"Since I know how to arrange this, do you think I will be ignorant of the variations? There are nine times nine, making eighty-one in all."

"Show me then."

Sima Wang returned to his own lines, which he altered several times, and then appeared again before his opponent. "Do you recognize my variations?"

"My formation admits of three hundred and sixty-five variations, equal to the number of days in the year. You are but a frog in a well and know nothing of the deeper mysteries."

Now Sima Wang knew that so many variations were possible, but had not mastered them all. He managed to put on a bold air and argued weakly, "I do not believe it. You try them."

"Go and call Deng Ai," replied Jiang Wei. "I will show them to him."

“General Deng has other plans. He is not interested in such tactics.”

“What plans could he have? Presumably no more than to have you keep me busy here, while he tries a surprise attack on my rear.”

Sima Wang was aghast. He tried to dash forward to bring on a general melee but Jiang Wei was quicker. At a signal from his whip, his men attacked from both wings with such ferocity that they quickly overwhelmed their foes, who threw down their weapons and fled for their lives.

Now Deng Ai had hurried on his van leader to attack the Shu army from behind. However, as the van leader turned round a hill, a bomb suddenly exploded. At once drums rolled, horns sounded, and an ambush was sprung, with Liao Hua in command. Without addressing each other the two officers engaged as their horses came together. In the first encounter the Wei van leader fell dead under Liao Hua’s sword. Deng Ai, caught un-prepared, hastened to withdraw but Zhang Yi also came forth and struck on the other side. The army of Wei was worsted. Deng Ai risked all to break through and he did at last, though his body was wounded four times by arrows. When he got to the riverside, Sima Wang also arrived, and they discussed how to drive away their enemy.

Sima Wang proposed a plan. “These days the ruler of Shu favors the eunuch Huang Hao and indulges himself in wine and women. Let us use the eunuch to sow distrust between the Second Ruler and his general, and so get Jiang Wei recalled. In that way we will lift this danger.”

So Deng Ai assembled his advisors and asked a volunteer to sneak into the Shu capital and bribe the eunuch. Dang Jun offered himself at once. So he was sent into Shu with valuable presents to win the heart of the eunuch and to disseminate the rumor that Jiang Wei bore a grudge against the Second Ruler and would soon desert to Wei.

In no time this rumor became the talk of the capital city. Huang Hao, who had been bought by Wei, carried it to the Second Ruler, who dispatched a messenger to recall Jiang Wei to the capital.

Meanwhile, Jiang Wei tried every day to bring the enemy to battle, but Deng Ai's army remained obstinately behind its defenses. Jiang Wei was beginning to feel suspicious when suddenly the Second Ruler's edict came, recalling him. Although ignorant of the reason, he could not but obey. When Deng Ai and his colleague learned of his withdrawal they knew that their plot had succeeded. They broke camp, intending to strike the retreating army.

Yue Yi was held back in his advance against Qi
As was Yue Fei* recalled after victories were won.

The result of the battle will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Zhuge Liang's good friends. See Chapter 37.

* A carpenter of great renown in the days of the Spring and Autumn period. "Displaying one's skill in carpentry before

Lu Ban" is a popular Chinese idiom to ridicule people who are ignorant of their own weaknesses.

* Famous general (1103–1142) of South Song Dynasty, who defeated the invading Jurchen army in various battles but was later murdered by the evil minister Qin Gui, who supported submission to the enemy. His shrine in the city of Hangzhou is a favorite spot with tourists.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN

Cao Mao Is Slain in His Carriage at South Gate

Jiang Wei Abandons His Supplies to Win a Battle

When the order to withdraw was given Liao Hua objected, "'A general out in the field may disobey even the command of his prince.' Although our lord has issued an edict to call us back we must not return."

But his colleague Zhang Yi disagreed with him. "The people all resent these years of military campaigns. I think it would be better to take the occasion of the recent victory to return and pacify the people. We can evolve some good plans later."

"You're right," said Jiang Wei.

An orderly retreat began. Liao Hua and Zhang Yi covered the rear to discourage the enemy from pursuing them.

Now Deng Ai had moved his men out to give chase, but when he saw ahead of him the fine array of flags and banners of his enemy, who retreated without haste and in perfect order, he had to admit that Jiang Wei had indeed learned well Zhuge Liang's strategies. He dared not pursue but returned to his camp at Qishan.

On his return to the capital Jiang Wei had an audience with the Second Ruler and inquired why he had been recalled.

The Second Ruler replied, “As you have been so long on the frontier, General, I feared the soldiers might be weary. So I called you back. There was no other reason.”

“I had already captured the Wei camps at Qishan and was on the verge of winning a complete victory. Unfortunately the campaign was abandoned halfway. This must be Deng Ai’s plot to sow distrust.”

The Second Ruler fell silent and said nothing.

Jiang Wei continued, “I vow to destroy those rebels and to devote myself to the country. Your Majesty should not listen to the babble of evil tongues and let mistrust grow in your heart.”

“I do not distrust you,” said the Second Ruler after a long pause. “You may return to Hanzhong and await events in Wei. Then launch another campaign.”

Jiang Wei left the court sighing deeply and soon went to Hanzhong.

Dang Jun went back to the Qishan camp and reported his success. Deng Ai said to Sima Wang, “The discord between the Emperor and his army commander will undoubtedly lead to internal conflicts.”

So they sent Dang Jun to Luoyang to report this to Sima Zhao, who was very much pleased. He began to consider

subduing Shu. Turning to his confidant Jia Chong, he asked, "What if I attack Shu now?"

"Not now," opposed Jia Chong. "The Emperor distrusts you. Once you leave the capital a coup is bound to occur. Last year a yellow dragon was seen twice in a well in Ning Mausoleum and the officials memorialized to congratulate the Emperor upon such an auspicious sign. But the Emperor said, 'It is not auspicious. The dragon represents the ruler. To be neither in Heaven nor on earth but trapped in a well is a portent of confinement in isolation.' And he wrote a poem entitled 'The Submerged Dragon', which undoubtedly points to you, my lord."

The dragon trapped a prisoner is,
No longer leaps he in th' abyss,
He soars not in the Milky Way,
Nor can he in the meadows play;
But coiled within a dismal well,
With slimy creatures he must dwell,
Must close his jaws, his claws retract,
Alas! quite like myself in fact.

The poem enraged Sima Zhao. "This fellow is trying to follow Cao Fang. If I don't remove him he will hurt me."

"I will see to it for you sooner or later," replied Jia Chong.

One summer day in the fifth year of the period of Sweet Dew, Sima Zhao had the effrontery to go to court armed with his sword. The Emperor rose to welcome him. Presently the courtiers proposed promoting Sima Zhao to the rank of Duke

of Jin, endowed with the Nine Gifts. The Emperor looked down and did not reply.

Sima Zhao cried vehemently, “My father, my brother, and I have all made great contributions to the kingdom of Wei. Am I not entitled to the rank of Duke of Jin?”

“Dare I refuse your request?” was the Emperor’s reply.

“You called us slimy creatures in your poem—what sort of courtesy is that?”

The Emperor could not reply, and Sima Zhao strode down the hall, smiling icily. All the courtiers shivered with fear.

The Emperor retreated into his chamber, where he summoned Wang Shen, Wang Jing, and Wang Ye for counsel. With tears in his eyes, the Emperor said to them, “It is obvious to all that Sima Zhao intends to usurp the throne. I cannot sit, awaiting the indignity of being deposed. You gentlemen must help me to put him down!”

“No, that will not do,” warned Wang Jing. “Remember in the old days, King Zhao of Lu could not tolerate his minister Ji, and tried to suppress him, but in the end he had to flee, thus losing his kingdom. Now the Sima family have long been in power and there are many senior officials, both within and without, who have curried favor from Sima Zhao, disregarding the rectitude of loyalty. Your Majesty’s guards are few and weak, without anyone to execute your command. If Your Majesty did not bear his tyranny silently, the most terrible misfortune would surely follow. Pray do not act in haste but plan his destruction slowly and carefully.”

“If I can bear this, what can’t I bear?” said the Emperor. “My mind is made up. I have no fear even if I must die!”

So saying he went inside to speak to the Empress Dowager.

The other two officials said to Wang Jing, “This is imperative. We must not allow the destruction of our whole clans. Let’s go and confess the whole thing to Lord Sima.”

Wang Jing said indignantly, “When the Emperor is in anxiety his ministers should be ashamed; and when the Emperor is shamed his ministers must die. Do you dare to contemplate disloyalty?”

Seeing that Wang Jing would not join them, the other two went to Sima Zhao and betrayed their Emperor.

Shortly after the Wei Emperor, Cao Mao, appeared. He ordered his personal guard, Jiao Bo, to muster together some three hundred night guards, servants, and attendants, who were to march out shouting and beating drums. Then the Emperor, drawing his sword and ascending his carriage, commanded this little force to proceed to the south gateway. Wang Jing prostrated himself in front of the carriage and begged the Emperor not to go.

Weeping, he said, “Your Majesty, to go against Sima Zhao with such a weak force is to drive the sheep into the tiger’s jaws. To die such a death is a useless sacrifice. Not that I care for my life, but I see the whole thing is indeed hopeless.”

“My men have proceeded,” said the Emperor. “Do not hinder me, sir.” And he headed toward the Gate of Clouds and Dragons.

There he saw Jia Chong riding up, wearing full military gear and flanked by two officers, commanding several thousand mail-clad Imperial Guards to murder him.

Cai Mao held up his sword and cried, “I am the Emperor. You people break into the palace so suddenly—are you intending to murder your lawful ruler?”

None of the soldiers dared to move forward at the sight of the Emperor. Then Jia Chong shouted to one of the officers, Cheng Ji: “What has His Lordship kept you for, if not for this day’s work?”

Cheng Ji took his halberd and turned to ask Jia Chong, “To kill or to tie him up?”

“His Lordship’s order is ‘Death.’”

Cheng Ji rushed toward the carriage, halberd in hand.

“How dare you, you rascal!” cried the Emperor.

But the shout was cut short by a thrust from the halberd full in his breast and the Emperor fell from the carriage. Another thrust, and the blade of the halberd pierced him through and came out from his back. The Emperor lay dead beside his carriage. His guard, Jiao Bo, raised his spear to avenge the Emperor, but was also slain. The rest of his small force fled.

Soon afterwards Wang Jing hurried up. He was in a fury with Jia Chong. “You treacherous scoundrel! How dare you commit regicide!”

Jia Chong angrily ordered his men to have him bound up. Then he sent the news to Sima Zhao, who went into the palace and saw that the Emperor was dead. Assuming an air of great shock he wept, beating his head against the royal carriage. All the senior officials were informed.

When Sima Fu came into the palace and saw the dead body of the Emperor, he rested the slain ruler’s head against his thigh and wept. “It is my fault that Your Majesty was murdered.”

He had the remains laid in a coffin and borne to a side hall. Sima Zhao entered the hall and called a general council of the courtiers. All came, except Chen Tai. Sima Zhao noticed his absence and sent Chen Tai’s uncle to call him.

Weeping aloud, Chen Tai cried, “People used to compare me with my uncle, but today my uncle cannot be compared with me.”

So he put on deep mourning and went to the palace, where he prostrated himself before the bier and wept for the slain ruler.

Squeezing a tear or two, Sima Zhao asked him, “How should this be dealt with?”

“Put Jia Chong alone to death,” replied Chen Tai. “That will appease the whole nation, however little it may be.”

Sima Zhao mused long before he spoke: “What less severe punishment can you think of?”

“I know only of more severe punishments, not less.”

“Cheng Ji is the vicious rebel,” said Sima Zhao. “Cut him to pieces and eliminate three generations of his family.”

Cheng Ji broke into loud and open abuse of Sima Zhao. “I was not responsible for the crime. Jia Chong gave me your own order.”

Sima Zhao ordered his men to cut out his tongue. To the last Cheng Ji never ceased protesting how he was wronged. His brother was also put to death in the market place, and their whole families were exterminated.

“The Emperor must die,” thus spoke Sima full plain
In Jia Chong’s hearing; and the Emperor was slain.
Although they killed Cheng Ji who dealt the blow,
The author of the crime we all well know.

Sima Zhao then had Wang Jing’s whole household imprisoned. Wang Jing was present when his mother was brought up a prisoner. He bowed his head to the ground and wept. “Your unfilial son has brought you great misfortune, dear mother!”

But his mother only laughed. “Who does not die? My only fear is not to die a worthy death. I have no regret to die for this.”

The next day the family were led out to execution. Both mother and son smiled as they went to their deaths, but the whole city wept tears of sorrow.

Sima Fu proposed that the body of the slain Emperor should receive a royal funeral and Sima Zhao consented. Jia Chong and some others urged Sima Zhao to put himself on the throne in place of Cao Mao, but he refused.

Sima Zhao said, "Formerly King Wen of Zhou had two-thirds of the empire and yet he served the Yin Dynasty. Therefore the sage Confucius called him the man of absolute virtue. Just as Emperor Wu (Cao Cao) of Wei would not take the throne from the Hans, I will not take it from Wei."

Hearing this Jia Chong and the others realized that he intended to place his son Sima Yan on the throne, so they ceased to urge him.

In the sixth month of the year Cao Huang, a grandson of Cao Cao's, was invested as Emperor, the reign title being changed to Jing Yuan. The new Emperor's name was changed to Cao Huan. Sima Zhao was prime minister and Duke of Jin, besides being given an enormous quantity of money and silk. All the other officials also received promotions and rewards.

When scouts brought the news into Shu, Jiang Wei rejoiced at having another excuse to wage war against Wei. So he wrote a letter to the ruler of Wu, asking him to mobilize an army to punish Sima Zhao for murdering his king, and presented a memorial to the Emperor of Shu, seeking permission to start an expedition against Wei. Permission being granted, Jiang Wei raised an army of 150,000 troops, and prepared several

thousand carts in which were placed wooden boxes. The two van leaders, Liao Hua and Zhang Yi, were to take Meridian Valley and Luo Valley respectively, while Jiang Wei was to seize Ye Valley. All the three valleys were to be captured by the time they emerged from the Qishan Mountains. The three armies set out at the same time and hastened toward Qishan.

Deng Ai was training his men in the Qishan Mountains when he heard that the Shu armies were once more on the war path. He called his officers together.

An advisor, called Wang Guan, said, "I have a plan to propose but I can't speak it openly. I have written it down here. Would you care to read it, General?" And he placed it before Deng Ai.

Deng Ai smiled after he finished reading. "A very good plan, but perhaps not enough to beguile Jiang Wei."

"I'm willing to stake my life on it," said Wang Guan.

"If you're so determined you'll succeed."

So 5,000 men were put under the leadership of Wang Guan, who set out without delay for Ye Valley, where he encountered scouts of Jiang Wei's force. Wang Guan shouted to them, "We are troops from Wei coming to surrender. Go and tell your commander."

The scouts went back and reported to Jiang Wei, who said, "Let the leader come in and see me but keep his soldiers outside."

Wang Guan came in and knelt before Jiang Wei. “I am a nephew of Wang Jing. Recently Sima Zhao slew the Emperor and exterminated my uncle’s whole clan. My hatred for him goes deep into my bones and I rejoice so much that you, General, have mobilized an army to punish him for his crimes. So I have come with my 5,000 men to surrender to you. I am ready to obey your commands in the struggle to wipe out the rebels so that I may avenge my uncle.”

Delighted, Jiang Wei said, “Since you have come to me with all sincerity, I will also be true to you. What my army needs is grain. There are several thousand carts of grain at the boundary of Shu, and I want you to bring these to Qishan. I will go straightway to capture the Qishan camps.”

Secretly rejoicing that Jiang Wei had walked into his trap, Wang Guan agreed at once.

“But you won’t need 5,000 men just for transporting the grain,” added Jiang Wei. “Take 3,000 and leave the rest as guides for me.”

Wang Guan, afraid that a refusal might arouse Jiang Wei’s suspicion, left with the 3,000 men, while the remainder were attached to Fu Qian’s force.

Suddenly Xiahou Ba came to see Jiang Wei. “Commander, why do you believe the tale of this Wang Guan? Although I was not so well-informed, while I was in Wei I had never heard that he was a nephew of Wang Jing’s. Do look into this matter more carefully, for there is not much truth in his story.”

“I know he’s false,” said Jiang Wei, laughing. “That’s why I have divided his men. I’m going to use his trick against him.”

Xiahou Ba asked Jiang Wei to explain.

“Sima Zhao is as wicked as Cao Cao. Since he has slain Wang Jing’s whole clan, is it likely that he would have left the man’s own nephew with an army outside the passes beyond his reach? So I knew he was up to some trick. Your view coincides with mine.”

So Jiang Wei did not go out by Ye Valley, but set some of his men to lie in wait on the road to watch out for Wang Guan’s spies. And indeed, in less than ten days, his men captured a spy with a letter from Wang Guan to Deng Ai. From the letter and its bearer Jiang Wei learned that Wang Guan intended to divert the grain to the Wei camp via some byroads on the twentieth of the eighth month, and requested Deng Ai to send men to Yunshan Valley to receive the convoy. The bearer was put to death and the letter was delivered to Deng Ai by a man dressed as a Wei soldier. But two alterations were made in the letter: the date was changed to the fifteenth instead of the twentieth and Deng Ai, rather than his officer, was asked to lead the reinforcement force to the valley.

At the same time several hundred wagons were emptied of their grain and filled up with inflammables, covered with green cloth. Fu Qian was ordered to lead the 2,000 Wei soldiers and show flags of the transport corps. Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba, each with a troop, went to hide in Yunshan Valley. Meanwhile, three bodies of men were ordered to seize Qishan: Jiang Shu was to advance through Ye Valley, while Liao Hua and Zhang Yi from Meridian and Luo valleys.

Now Deng Ai, delighted with the letter from Wang Guan, hastened to send back a reply. On the fifteenth he led 50,000 veterans to Yunshan Valley. Once he got there he sent scouts far ahead to reconnoiter from elevated ground. There they saw endless lines of grain carts progressing. Deng Ai reined in his horse and watched. Surely enough, they were all soldiers of Wei.

"It's getting dark," urged his officers. "Let's quickly assist Wang Guan from the valley."

But Deng Ai was more cautious. "The shape of the hills in front are indistinct. If by any chance an ambush has been laid there we could hardly escape. We can only wait here."

But just then two messengers galloped up and said, "As General Wang was crossing the Shu border with the grain convoy, he was pursued. Pray go to his rescue as soon as possible."

Alarmed, Deng Ai hastened to press onward. It was then the first watch, and a full moon was shining in the sky, making the night as bright as day. From behind the hills came shouts of war and Deng Ai assumed his comrades were fighting a battle.

So he rushed to the rear of the hills. Suddenly a body of men emerged from the shelter of a grove, and at their head rode the Shu officer, Fu Qian.

"Deng Ai, you stupid rascal! You have fallen into our general's trap. Dismount and be slain!"

Deng Ai, in panic, turned to flee. Then the carts burst into flames. At the signal, out rushed the two hidden Shu forces, breaking the Wei formation into utterly disjointed parts. The hills all around resounded with cries of "A thousand taels of gold for anyone who captures Deng Ai, and a marquisette as well!"

Terrified, Deng Ai dropped his helmet and armor, slipped from his steed, and mingled among the foot soldiers, with whom he scrambled up the hills to escape. Jiang Wei and Xiahou Ba only looked for him among the mounted officers, never guessing that he would try to get away on foot with the common soldiers. So he was not captured.

Jiang Wei then led his victorious men to take the grain carts from Wang Guan.

Meanwhile, Wang Guan had prepared the grain carts and was only waiting for the appointed time to enact his scheme. Suddenly a man of his came to report that the ruse had been discovered and Deng Ai had suffered a serious defeat and might have died. Wang Guan, deeply affected by the news, sent out scouts to investigate and they returned to say that three troops were coming to surround them. Soon clouds of dust were seen rising from behind. All four sides being blocked, there was no way of escape. Wang Guan ordered his men to set fire to the grain, and instantly flames rose high into the air.

"The enemy is upon us," cried Wang Guan to his men. "Fight to the death, all of you!"

He led his men to make a sortie in the west, but the men of Shu came in pursuit from three sides. Thinking that his enemy would try at all costs to get back to his own country, Jiang Wei had not expected Wang Guan to turn toward Hanzhong. As he had but few men to risk a battle, Wang Guan destroyed all the passes and the plank roads as he went. Fearing the loss of Hanzhong, Jiang Wei abandoned pursuing Deng Ai, but made all haste along some byroads after Wang Guan. Surrounded on all sides, Wang Guan jumped into the Blue Dragon River and perished. All his soldiers were buried alive.

A victory was won, but it had been costly. Much grain was lost and the covered roads destroyed. Jiang Wei led his men into Hanzhong.

Deng Ai gathered together his beaten men and escaped to Qishan. From there he reported his defeat and asked for demotion as a penalty. However, in view of his past achievements, Sima Zhao did not want to punish him but, on the contrary, consoled him with gifts, which he distributed among the families of those who had been killed. Sima Zhao also sent him 50,000 reinforcements, lest Shu should attack again.

Jiang Wei quickly had the plank roads mended and again proposed a new expedition against Wei.

Repair the roads for marching feet to tread,
The strife will not cease before he is dead.

Which side would win the struggle will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN

The Second Ruler Listens to Slander and Recalls His Army

Jiang Wei Takes Command of the Cantonments to Escape Death

In the tenth month of the fifth year of the reign period Jing Yao, Jiang Wei was occupied with preparations for the renewal of a military operation against Wei, mending the plank roads, gathering supplies, and assembling his boats on the waterways of Hanzhong. Having completed the preparations, he sent another memorial which stated: "Although I have not made great accomplishments in my expeditions, yet I have driven fear into the hearts of the men of Wei. Our men have been long under training, and they must now be used, or else they will go to pieces for lack of employment. The men are ready to die and the officers prepared to carry out any commands from Your Majesty. If I do not succeed this time I am willing to accept the penalty of death."

The Second Ruler read the memorial but could not make up his mind. As he hesitated, Qiao Zhou stepped forward and said, "I have been observing the heavens and I saw the commander's star dull and become obscured in the division of the sky above our land. This expedition will be disastrous, and I entreat Your Majesty to halt it."

The Second Ruler replied, “Let us see the result of this campaign. If it fails then the war will cease.”

Thus Qiao Zhou’s advice went unheeded. He returned home and sighed in distress. From then on he did not attend court sessions on the pretext of illness.

At Hanzhong Jiang Wei was all set for his new expedition. Before departure, he asked Liao Hua: “I’m determined to conquer Wei this time. Which place do you advise I should seize first?”

“General, these long years of military campaigns have given the army and the people no rest. Besides, Deng Ai is a most shrewd strategist, not an ordinary opponent. Yet you, General, insist on undertaking a task of insurmountable difficulties. I am afraid I dare not advise you.”

Jiang Wei flared up in fury. “The late prime minister launched six expeditions into Qishan, all for the good of the state. Now I have attempted eight times. Was any one of those actions meant to serve my private ends? This time I will take Taoyang first, and I will punish any opposition with death.”

He left Liao Hua to defend Hanzhong and departed with his army of 300,000 men. His movements were reported in the Wei camps at Qishan. At the time Deng Ai was discussing warfare with Sima Wang. On hearing the news Deng Ai sent out his men to reconnoiter, who returned to report that the Shu army was advancing toward Taoyang.

Sima Wang said, “Jiang Wei is full of schemes. Could it be that this move is a ruse and his real intention is to seize Qishan?”

“No,” replied Deng Ai. “He has really come to take Taoyang.”

“How do you know?”

“In the past Jiang Wei always tried to seize places where we had stored grain. But Taoyang has no grain, so he thinks it will not be properly defended as we will concentrate our efforts on Qishan. But if he takes that place he can store his supplies there and get in touch with the Qiang tribesmen, so as to establish a longterm occupation.”

“If so, what should we do?”

“We can divide the troops here into two bodies and hasten to the rescue of Taoyang. I know a small town not far from Taoyang, which is the passage to that place. You take a troop to Taoyang and hide quietly in there. Do not show your ensigns or beat drums, but leave open the four gates. I will lie in wait at the small town near Taoyang. We will surely win a big victory.”

Then he gave his colleague some secret instructions as to what he should do in the city of Taoyang.

Having decided on their plans the two left to carry them out, leaving the officer Shi Zuan in charge of the Qishan camp.

Meanwhile, Xiahou Ba led the van of the Shu army toward Taoyang. As he drew near he noticed that the place seemed to be unoccupied. No flags adorned the walls and the gates stood wide open.

Feeling suspicious, Xiahou Ba turned to his officers and asked, “Could this be a trap?”

“Obviously this is an empty city,” replied his officers. “The few people that live here must have abandoned it and fled when they heard of our coming.”

Still not convinced, Xiahou Ba rode to the south of the city to have a good look. There he saw many common folks, old and young, running away toward the northwest.

“The city is really empty,” said Xiahou Ba joyfully.

Leading the way he charged in first and the men followed. As they came near the outer wall, however, there was a sudden explosion. All at once drums rolled, trumpets blared, and flags hoisted up. In the same breath the drawbridge was pulled up.

“Alas, I’ve blundered into a trap!” moaned Xiahou Ba in great alarm.

As he hastened to retreat, arrows and stones pelted down like rain. Xiahou Ba and his five hundred men lost their lives tragically beneath the city walls.

Brave was Jiang Wei, who had a good plan made,
But Deng Ai outwitted him with a counter scheme.

Pity this Xiahou Ba, who with Han linked his fate
Lost his life under arrows by the city wall.

The flights of arrows from the city was followed by a sortie led by Sima Wang, which broke up the Shu forces. However, Jiang Wei came up and drove off Sima Wang, and the men of Shu camped beside the walls. He was very grieved at the loss of his able colleague, Xiahou Ba.

That night at the second watch, Deng Ai and his men left the small town near the city. They sneaked into the Shu camp by an underground tunnel and made a surprise attack, which threw the Shu forces into great confusion. Jiang Wei tried to discipline his men but failed. At the same time, drums began to roll and horns to clang from the city and Sima Wang and his men arrived to join the attack. Under the double attack the Shu army suffered a serious setback. Jiang Wei pushed right and charged left, only getting clear by a desperate fight. Then the army retreated some twenty li to encamp.

After these two setbacks the men of Shu lost their confidence.

Jiang Wei said to his officers, “Success and failure are but everyday occurrences for an army. Although we have lost officers and men, it is not enough to discourage us. Whether or not we are to conquer the north depends on this campaign. None of you must waver in this aim. Whoever mentions retreat will be put to instant death.”

Zhang Yi said, “With so many men of Wei deployed here, their camp at Qishan must be quite undefended. I propose, General, that you continue the contest with Deng Ai here while I go and capture Qishan. After the seizure of the nine

camps we can proceed to Chang'an. That will be our best bet."

Jiang Wei took his advice. So Zhang Yi left with the rear division of the army to take Qishan, while Jiang Wei went down to the small town to provoke Deng Ai into fighting. The challenge this time was accepted, and the two armies arrayed themselves, facing each other. Jiang Wei and Deng Ai exchanged several dozen bouts but were equally matched. Both retreated to their camps. The next day Jiang Wei challenged again, but Deng Ai declined to come out. The Shu soldiers hurled abuse and insults at their opponents, but all to no avail.

In his camp Deng Ai thought to himself, "In spite of their defeats they remain here and even persist in challenging me for battle. They must have sent part of their army to seize my Qishan camps. The officer there is not shrewd and his force is weak. Undoubtedly he will be beaten. I must go to his rescue myself."

Deng Ai called in his son, Deng Zhong, to whom he said: "Hold this place most carefully. Let them challenge as they may, but don't go out. Tonight I'm going to rescue our camps at Qishan."

At the second watch that night Jiang Wei was in his tent pondering over his plans, when he was disturbed by a great shouting and drumming. Soldiers told him that Deng Ai had suddenly appeared with a troop to challenge. The officers asked to go out to fight, but Jiang Wei forbade them to act without discretion.

However, Deng Ai had only made a detour by the Shu camp to reconnoiter on his way to reinforce Qishan.

Jiang Wei said to his officers, "Deng Ai is only feigning a night attack. He has certainly gone to relieve Qishan."

So leaving Fu Qian to hold the camp, Jiang Wei went with 3,000 men to go to the aid of Zhang Yi.

At that time Zhang Yi was attacking the Wei position at Qishan. The defending officer, Shi Zuan, had few men and the camps were on the verge of falling when the sudden appearance of Deng Ai saved them. The onslaught of Deng Ai's force drove Zhang Yi back against the hills, thus trapping him. Just as he was panicking, Zhang Yi heard the sounds of war and saw the Wei soldiers suddenly turning back in confusion.

"General Jiang Wei has come!" his men told him.

Zhang Yi took the opportunity to take the offensive and the tables were turned. Deng Ai, caught between the two forces, lost the battle and had to retreat into his camps at Qishan, which Jiang Wei soon surrounded.

Here, a digression is necessary. In Chengdu, the Second Ruler of Shu fell more and more under the malign influence of Huang Hao and indulged himself in luxury and dissipation. Government was left to look after itself.

At the time there was a high-ranking court official named Liu Yan, who had a very beautiful wife. One day she went into the palace to visit the Empress, who kept her there a whole

month. Liu Yan erroneously suspected an affair between his wife and the Second Ruler and took a brutal revenge on the lady. He had her bound and ordered five hundred of his soldiers to hit her dozens of times on the face with their boots. She swooned many times.

The cruel deed reached the ears of the Second Ruler, who became very angry and ordered an investigation of Liu Yan's crime and its punishment. The judges came up with a charge against Liu Yan to the effect that, "Soldiers are not proper persons to administer a punishment to one's wife, and the face is not a portion of the body to bear punishment; the author of this crime should be put to death in the market place." Therefore Liu Yan was beheaded.

Thereafter, officials' wives were forbidden to go to court. But the incident disturbed the officials, who resented the Second Ruler for his unbridled sensuality, and gradually good men left the court while the mean swarmed in. Among the sycophants of Huang Hao was a certain general named Yan Yu, whose lack of a single military achievement had not stood in the way of preferment. Hearing that Jiang Wei was with his forces at Qishan, Yan Yu persuaded the eunuch to propose to the Second Ruler that Jiang Wei should be recalled and he himself sent to command the army. The Second Ruler agreed, and the edict was issued.

Jiang Wei was attacking the Wei camps at Qishan in full force, when three edicts came, all to the same effect, recalling him to the capital. Disobedience being out of the question, Jiang Wei ceased all operations and sent the Taoyang force back first. Then gradually he and Zhang Yi withdrew.

In his camp, Deng Ai wondered at the rolling of drums all night, but by daylight he was told that the men of Shu had withdrawn and their camps were empty. Suspecting some ruse, Deng Ai did not pursue.

Arriving in Hanzhong, the army halted and Jiang Wei went with the envoy to the capital to see the Second Ruler. Here he waited ten days, and still the Second Ruler held no court. Jiang Wei was much puzzled.

One day he again went to court. At the palace gate he met Xi Zheng, a secretary.

Jiang Wei asked him, "Do you know the reason why I was recalled?"

"Why, General, don't you know?" replied Xi Zheng, smiling. "Huang Hao wanted to give Yan Yu a chance to win merit, so he intrigued for your recall. Now they have found out that Deng Ai is too clever to be tackled, and so they have dropped this idea."

Jiang Wei was indignant. "I will certainly slay this eunuch!"

"No, General," Xi Zheng checked him. "You're the successor of our great prime minister, who bequeathed to you his unfinished task. You have too heavy a responsibility to act hastily or indiscreetly. Should our lord disapprove, it would go ill with you."

"Thank you, sir, for your good advice," said Jiang Wei gratefully.

The next day, the Second Ruler was drinking with his favorite eunuch in the garden when Jiang Wei walked in with a few followers. However, before Jiang Wei got close someone alerted Huang Hao, who at once hid himself behind some rocks by the lake.

Jiang Wei approached the pavilion where the Second Ruler sat and made his obeisance. With tears in his eyes he said, "I had Deng Ai surrounded at Qishan when Your Majesty's three edicts came to recall me. I wonder what has been Your Majesty's intention."

The Second Ruler could make no reply.

Then Jiang Wei continued, "This Huang Hao is wicked and cunning. He monopolizes power just as those ten eunuchs did in Emperor Ling's time. Your Majesty has only to call to mind Zhang Rang in recent times, or Zhao Gao in earlier days. Slay this man quickly and the court will be purified. So will the northern territory be reclaimed."

The Second Ruler smiled. "Huang Hao is but an attendant of no importance, one who runs errands for me. Even if he tried to gain power, he could not do anything. I used to wonder why Dong Yun seemed to hate poor Huang Hao so much. Why do you take any notice of him, General?"

"Unless Your Majesty gets rid of him now, disaster will not be far away," said Jiang Wei, bowing his head to the ground.

The Second Ruler replied, "If you love someone, you want him to live; if you dislike him, you desire him to die. Can't you, General, tolerate a poor eunuch?"

He ordered one of the attendants to go and call Huang Hao. When he approached the pavilion, the Second Ruler told him to ask pardon of Jiang Wei.

Huang Hao prostrated himself before the general and pleaded in tears. “I am merely attending to His Majesty’s needs day and night, and never meddle in state affairs. Pray pay no heed to what people say. My life rests in your hands, General. Pray have pity on me.”

As he finished his words he wept and bowed again. Jiang Wei left the palace, still burning with anger. Then he went to seek Xi Zheng, to whom he related what had happened.

“General, you’re in grave danger,” said Xi Zheng. “And if you’re in peril, the country will perish without you.”

“Sir, can you please advise me as to how I can secure the country and save myself?”

Xi Zheng replied, “There is a place in Longxi, called Tazhong, where the land is rich and fertile. Why don’t you, General, request the Emperor to let you lead the army there for farming and training as Prime Minister Zhuge once did? There are four advantages: first, you can gather in wheat to feed your army; secondly, you can try to seize all the towns in the Longyou region; thirdly, you can keep Wei from ever daring to invade Hanzhong; and fourthly, as you’re away from the capital with the army under your control, no one will dare intrigue against you, and you will be safe from any danger. Thus you can ensure the safety of the state and yourself. But there is no time to lose.”

“Thank you for your words of gold and jewels,” said Jiang Wei appreciatively.

Without loss of time, Jiang Wei petitioned the throne and obtained the Second Ruler’s consent. Then he returned to Hanzhong, where he assembled his officers and told them his plans.

“Our many expeditions have failed to achieve success, owing to lack of supplies. Now I’m going to take 80,000 men to Tazhong, where we will till the land and grow wheat to prepare for future campaigns. All of you are weary with prolonged fighting and may now rest your men in the valley and defend Hanzhong. The men of Wei will have to drag their grain thousands of li distance, struggling up hills and mountains. The drudgery will lead to exhaustion, which will result in their withdrawal. That will be the time to smite them.”

Then he appointed Hu Ji to protect Hanshou, Wang Han to Yuecheng, and Jiang Bin to Hancheng. Jiang Shu and Fu Qian were ordered to hold the passes. Having made these arrangements, Jiang Wei went off to Tazhong to grow grain.

Deng Ai discovered that Jiang Wei had built more than forty camps in Tazhong, each connected with the next like the joints of a huge serpent. He sent out spies to survey the country and draw a map of these encampments, which was duly submitted to the court.

When Sima Zhao, Duke of Jin, examined the map, he was very angry. “Jiang Wei has invaded our land many times and

we have been unable to destroy him. He is really my deepest worry."

Jia Chong said, "He has learned well Zhuge Liang's strategies and it is hard to drive him away in haste. What we need is a brave and crafty officer to assassinate him, so as to save the trouble of waging war."

But another official objected: "That is not necessary. Liu Shan, the Second Ruler of Shu, is steeped in dissipation and confides in the eunuch Huang Hao. The high-ranking officials are concerned solely with their own safety, and Jiang Wei has gone to Tazhong to protect himself. If you send an able general to attack Shu, victory is certain. What is the need for an assassin's dagger?"

"Excellent idea," said Sima Zhao, laughing. "But who should I send to attack Shu?"

"Deng Ai is a rare talent," said the official. "If he has Zhong Hui as his second, Shu will be conquered."

"That's exactly what I think," said Sima Zhao.

So he summoned Zhong Hui and said to him, "I want you to lead an army to attack Wu. Will you go?"

"Your lordship's real intention is to attack Shu, not Wu," replied Zhong Hui.

"How well you read my mind!" laughed Sima Zhao. "But how are you going to conduct the campaign?"

“I thought that Your Lordship would desire to attack Shu, so I have already prepared maps here.”

Sima Zhao opened the maps and found they had clear and detailed markings of sites where camps were to be pitched, grain and fodder to be stored, and places where the army was to advance or to retreat.

“What an excellent general you are!” said Sima Zhao, extremely pleased. “Would you go with Deng Ai to take Shu?”

“The land of Shu is vast, and more than one army is needed. Deng Ai and I can move along separate routes.”

Zhong Hui was given the title of General–Defender of the West and the insignia of a commander-in-chief over the forces within the passes and the authority to employ the troops of the prefectures of Qing, Xu, Yan, Yu, Jing, and Yang. At the same time a commission was sent to Deng Ai giving him command of the forces outside the passes, with the title of General– Conqueror of the West. He was asked to agree on a time with Zhong Hui to launch a joint offensive against Shu.

On the following day in court, Sima Zhao mentioned his plan to attack Shu.

General Deng Dun objected: “Jiang Wei has repeatedly invaded our country, and the wars have cost us many lives. Our efforts to maintain a firm defense are yet inadequate to guarantee our own safety. How can we venture into a distant and dangerous country, inviting trouble upon ourselves?”

“I am sending a righteous army to destroy an unrighteous ruler,” cried Sima Zhao in wrath. “How dare you oppose me?”

He ordered the executioners to put the general to death, and in a minute the victim’s head was laid below the steps of the hall. All those present turned pale.

Sima Zhao said, “It has been six years since I returned from my expedition to the east, and these years have been spent in training the army and preparing the weaponry. I have long intended to wipe out both Wu and Shu. Now I will destroy Shu first, and then move downstream by water and by land to descend upon Wu and conquer the south. In this way I can eliminate both Shu and Wu. Let me give you my calculation of what forces they have in Shu: there are about 80–90,000 garrisoning the capital; only 40–50,000 guarding the frontier; and some 60–70,000 with Jiang Wei, farming the land in Tazhong. On our side, I have ordered Deng Ai to command the forces outside the passes in the Longyou region—totaling more than 100,000—to engage Jiang Wei and keep him from moving east. I am going to send Zhong Hui with 200–300,000 veterans to go to the Luo Valley and advance from three directions to seize Hanzhong. The ruler of Shu is stupid and confused. With his frontier cities in ruins and his people quaking with fear, his land is doomed to fall.”

The assembly praised him for his perspicacity.

Zhong Hui began to mobilize his troops for the expedition against Shu as soon as he received his seal of office. Apprehensive that his real target of attack should be known, he gave out that his force was directed against the south; to

give substance to the pretense, he ordered the five prefectures of Qing, Yan, Yu, Jing, and Yang to construct large ships, and sent an officer, Tang Zi by name, to regions along the sea coast to collect more vessels. This move even fooled Sima Zhao, who called him in and asked him why he was building ships.

Zhong Hui replied, "If Shu hears that we intend to attack the west they will turn to Wu for assistance. So I let it be known that I am going to attack the south, to ensure that Wu will not dare to stir. Within a year Shu will be beaten and the ships will be ready, and our expedition against the south can begin. Thus everything follows in good order, does it not?"

Sima Zhao was extremely pleased. A day was then chosen for the army to start its march westward.

On the third day of the seventh mouth of the fourth year of the period Jing Yuan in Wei (A.D. 263), Zhong Hui set out on his military campaign against Shu.

Sima Zhao escorted him out of the city for ten li and then returned. An official named Shao Ti whispered a word of warning to him: "My lord, you have given Zhong Hui command of a large army to go against Shu. I think he is too ambitious to be trusted with such power all to himself."

"Do you think I'm not aware of this?" answered Sima Zhao, smiling.

"Then why have you sent him alone without a co-commander?"

Sima Zhao said something to Shao Ti, which put his doubts at rest.

Zhong went alone, although his master knew,
Occasion serving, he would be untrue.

What Sima Zhao said will be disclosed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN

Zhong Hui Divides His Army to Take Hanzhong

Zhuge Liang Makes an Appearance at Dingjun Hill

Sima Zhao said to Shao Ti, “The courtiers all maintained that Shu could not be attacked because they are afraid if we force them to fight, we will certainly be defeated. Now Zhong Hui alone puts forward a plan to subdue Shu, which shows that he is not afraid. Since he is fearless, he will surely defeat Shu. As the country falls, the people of Shu will be drained of any courage. As the saying goes, ‘Generals defeated in war have no right to brag about courage, and officials of a fallen country cannot hope to restore it.’ Even if Zhong Hui attempts to revolt, how will the men of Shu be in a position to help him? As for our men, whose only thought will be to return home after the victory, they will not follow him in revolt. Hence it is not a problem to worry about. But keep all this to yourself.”

Convinced, Shao Ti bowed.

In the meantime, Zhong Hui had finished setting up camps. He summoned his eighty officers to his tent to issue them orders.

“I need a general of rank to be the van leader,” said Zhong Hui. “He must cut trails in the hills and build bridges across rivers. Who is bold enough to take up this responsibility?”

“I am,” responded Xu Yi, son of the “Tiger General” Xu Zhu.

“None is more suitable than him,” said all those present.

“All right,” approved Zhong Hui. “You’re lithe and strong, bold as your father, and all your colleagues also recommend you. Take 5,000 cavalry-men and a thousand infantrymen to seize Hanzhong without delay. The army will march in three directions. You’re to lead the center unit and advance through Ye Valley, while the left and the right units are to proceed from the Luo and Meridian Valleys. These are all rugged and precipitous mountain areas. You must order your men to level the ground, repair bridges, cut trails through the hills, and break away rocks to ensure that no obstacles lie in the way of the advancing army. Use all diligence, for failure will entail punishment by military law.”

Xu Yi took the order and departed immediately. Zhong Hui soon followed in all haste with his large army.

At Longxi, Deng Ai had also received the order to attack Shu. He at once sent Sima Wang to enlist the aid of the Qiang tribesmen. Next he summoned the prefects of the neighboring four districts, who came to his place with their own forces to receive his orders.

When all the troops gathered in Longxi, Deng Ai had a dream: he had climbed up a lofty mountain and was looking across at Hanzhong, when suddenly a spring gushed out

beneath his feet and the water welled up with great force. He awoke all in a sweat. Unable to sleep again, he sat waiting for dawn. At daybreak he summoned his personal guard, Yuan Shao, who was skilled in divination according to the Book of Changes. He told the guard his dream and asked for an interpretation.

Yuan Shao replied, "According to the Book of Changes, 'water on a mountain' signifies the symbol Jian,* which means 'propitious to the southwest, but unpropitious to the northeast.' The sage Confucius said, 'Jian augurs well to the southwest: go there and win success; but ill to the northeast: no road lies ahead.' In this expedition, General, you are sure to overcome Shu, but unfortunately you will be held there and cannot return."

Deng Ai listened to his interpretation with distress. Just then, a dispatch arrived from Zhong Hui, asking him to raise an army and join him in Hanzhong. So Deng Ai sent Zhuge Xu, Governor of Yongzhou, to cut off Jiang Wei's retreat, and three others to attack Tazhong from the left, right, and rear respectively. Each of them was given 15,000 men. Deng Ai himself took command of 30,000 men to reinforce them.

Here a small incident must be recounted. On the day when Zhong Hui embarked on his expedition to the west all the court officials came out of the capital to see him off. It was a grand sight, the array of banners shading the sunlight, and the helmets and armor of the men glittering like frost. The soldiers were fit and the horses sturdy. All the officials expressed admiration and envy of the commander.

All except Liu Shi, who only smiled, saying nothing. Noticing his cold demeanor, another official, Wang Xiang, held Liu Shi's hand and asked: "Do you think Zhong Hui and Deng Ai will overcome Shu on this expedition?"

"They will overcome Shu all right, but I'm afraid neither will ever come back," replied Liu Shi.

"Why do you say that?" asked Wang Xiang.

But Liu Shi smiled without answering. Wang Xiang did not persist.

At Tazhong Jiang Wei was informed of the intended invasion by Wei. He at once dispatched a memorial to the Second Ruler, which said: "Pray issue an edict to order Zhang Yi to go and defend Yangan Pass and Liao Hua to hold Yangping Bridge. These two places are of crucial importance and their loss will endanger Hanzhong. In the meantime, send an envoy to Wu to seek their support. I will raise the army in Tazhong to resist the enemy."

At this time the reign title of Shu had been changed to the first year of Yan Xing. The Second Ruler spent his days amusing himself in the company of his favorite eunuch, Huang Hao. One day Jiang Wei's memorial arrived. After reading it the Second Ruler summoned the eunuch and said, "Wei has raised two huge armies under Deng Ai and Zhong Hui to invade us by two different routes. What is to be done?"

"There is nothing of the sort. Jiang Wei is making all this up because he wants to win fame for himself. Have no worry, Your Majesty. I hear there is a wise woman in the city, who

worships a god that can predict future events. Your Majesty can summon her for inquiries."

The Second Ruler consented. The rear hall was then fitted up for the seance, where incense, candles, and sacrificial articles were laid out in order. Then the woman was conducted to the palace in a carriage and asked to sit in the Second Ruler's dragon couch. The Second Ruler lit the incense and prayed. Suddenly the woman let down her hair, slipped out of her shoes, and began to leap barefoot dozens of times in the hall. After that she coiled herself up on a table.

The eunuch said, "The spirit has now descended. Send everyone away and pray to her."

So the attendants were dismissed, and the Second Ruler bowed and prayed again.

She cried out, "I am the guardian spirit of Shu. Your Majesty enjoys peace and happiness. Why do you have to inquire about other matters? Within a few years the land of Wei will also belong to you. You have never to worry, Your Majesty."

She then fell to the ground as in a swoon, and it was some time before she revived. The Second Ruler was well satisfied with her prophesy and gave her rich presents. From then on he believed all she told him and ignored Jiang Wei's concerns. Each day, he drank and feasted in the palace, giving himself wholly to pleasure. Jiang Wei dispatched one urgent memorial after another, but the eunuch intercepted them all. Thus the country became in grave danger.

Meanwhile, Zhong Hui was hastening toward Hanzhong. The van leader Xu Yi, anxious to perform some startling merit ahead of all others, led his force to Nanzheng Pass.

He said to his officers, “Hanzhong lies just next to this pass. The defense here is weak. Let’s strive our best to seize it.”

His officers followed his order and dashed forward together to capture the fort. But the pass commander, Lu Xun, who had been informed of the coming of the invaders, posted soldiers on both sides of the bridge, armed with Zhuge Liang’s multiple-shot bows and crossbows. As soon as the attacking force appeared, the signal was given by a clapper and a terrific discharge of arrows and bolts opened up. Xu Yi hurriedly turned back, but dozens of his men were already shot and the Wei force was defeated.

Xu Yi reported this to Zhong Hui, who went with over a hundred mailed horsemen to see for himself. Again bows and arrows flew down in clouds, and Zhong Hui at once turned to flee.

But at that moment Lu Xun rushed down from the pass with five hundred soldiers to pursue. Zhong Hui hastened to cross the bridge at a gallop, but as he did so the earth on the bridge suddenly gave way and his horse’s hoof was caught in the falling mud. Zhong Hui was nearly thrown down. The horse could not free himself, so Zhong Hui slipped off its back and fled on foot. As he ran down the bridge Lu Xun came to strike him with a spear, but one of Zhong Hui’s followers, Xun Kai by name, shot an arrow at the Shu officer and ended his life. At this lucky turn of events, Zhong Hui signaled to his men to seize the pass. The defenders were afraid to shoot, as their

own men were intermingled with the enemy, and soon Zhong Hui scattered the Shu soldiers and the pass fell into his hands.

Xun Kai was well rewarded for the shot that had saved his general's life. He was promoted to be Zhong Hui's personal guard and given as presents a complete outfit of horse saddle and armor. Then he called Xu Yi into his tent and blamed him for neglecting his duty.

"As leader of the van you ought to cut trails in hills and build bridges across rivers. You should see to it that bridges and roads are mended and in good condition so that the army can march easily, yet on the bridge just now my horse's hoof was caught, and I nearly fell from the bridge. Were it not for Xun Kai I would have been slain. You have been disobedient and must bear the penalty."

Then he ordered Xu Yi to be put to death. The other officers tried to plead for him, saying that his father Xu Zhu had rendered great services to the court.

Zhong Hui said angrily, "How can discipline be maintained if the laws are not enforced?"

Xu Yi was executed and his head exposed. This severe punishment put fear into the hearts of the officers.

On the Shu side, Wang Han was guarding Yuecheng and Jiang Bin was holding Hancheng. As the enemy came in great force, they dared not go out to meet them, but stood on the defensive with the gates of the cities closed shut.

Seeing this, Zhong Hui issued an order: “Speed is the soul of war. There should be no halts.”

So he commanded Li Fu to lay siege to Yuecheng, and Xun Kai to surround Hancheng. He himself led the main army to capture Yangan Pass.

The commander of the pass, Fu Qian, discussed a plan with his comrade Jiang Shu to withstand the enemy.

“The enemy is too strong to resist,” said Jiang Shu. “We’d better maintain a strict defense.”

“I don’t agree,” objected Fu Qian. “They must be fatigued, coming from so far away. We mustn’t be daunted by their huge number. Unless we go out and give battle, the two cities of Yuecheng and Hancheng will fall.”

Jiang Shu fell silent and made no reply. Suddenly it was reported that the main body of the enemy had arrived at the front of the pass, and both officers went up the wall to look.

Whirling his whip, Zhong Hui shouted to them, “I have here a mighty army of 100,000. Surrender quickly and you will be given employment according to your ranks now, but if you are obstinate enough to resist, then when we take the pass, you will all perish, jade or stone sharing the same fate.”

This threat threw Fu Qian into fury. Telling his colleague to guard the pass, he rushed down to give battle, taking 3,000 men with him. Zhong Hui at once turned back and the Wei army retreated. At this success Fu Qian pursued, but soon the army of Wei closed around. Fu Qian turned to retreat back

into the pass, but to his great shock he saw flags of Wei flying up on the wall.

"I have yielded to Wei," cried Jiang Shu from the wall.

In wrath Fu Qian cried, "Ungrateful, shameless traitor! How can you ever look people in the face?" He turned once more to the battle. The men of Wei converged on all sides and had him entirely surrounded. He fought desperately, thrusting left and right, but could not break through. His men were mostly wounded or dead.

Fu Qian raised his eyes to Heaven and sighed deeply. "Alive I am an officer of Shu—dead I will be a ghost of my country."

Once more he plunged into the thickest part of the fight. He was severely wounded by several spear thrusts and blood soaked through his robe and armor. Then his steed fell, so he took his life with his own sword.

The loyalty Fu showed in stressful days
Won him a thousand years' noble praise;
The base Jiang Shu lived on, a life disgraced,
I would prefer the death that Fu Qian faced.

With the fall of the pass, great booty of grain and weapons fell into the hands of Zhong Hui. Delighted, he feasted the army. That night the men of Wei rested in the city of Yangan. Suddenly, sounds of men shouting were heard from the southwest. Zhong Hui got up in haste and went out to investigate, but the sounds had ceased. He returned to his tent but all through the night none of them dared to sleep. On the following night, at midnight, shouting rose again in the

southwest. Zhong Hui was alarmed and puzzled. As day dawned he sent scouts out to search the area, but they came back to say they had gone over ten li without seeing a single enemy. Still filled with apprehension, Zhong Hui took several hundred fully-armed cavalrymen to explore the same area. On the way they came upon a hill of sinister aspect overhung by a dismal cloud, and wreathed in mist at the summit.

"What hill is that?" asked Zhong Hui, pulling up to question the guide.

"That is the Dingjun Hill," replied the guide. "Years before, Xiahou Yuan met his end here."

This only displeased Zhong Hui even more, who turned to ride back. Rounding the curve of a hill, he came full into a violent gust of wind and there suddenly appeared several thousand cavalrymen descending with the wind to attack.

The whole party, panic-stricken, galloped off, with Zhong Hui leading the way. Many officers fell from their steeds. Yet when they returned to the pass not a man or a horse was missing, although there were many with bruises and cuts from the falls, and many who had lost their helmets. Everyone claimed seeing phantom horsemen coming down from the dark clouds, who, nevertheless, did no harm when they approached, but melted away as a blast of air.

Zhong Hui summoned the surrendered officer Jiang Shu. "Is there a holy shrine on the hill?"

"No," he replied. "There is only the tomb of Prime Minister Zhuge."

“Then this must have been his spirit demonstrating its power,” said Zhong Hui in alarm. “I myself will go and offer sacrifices to him.”

So the next day he prepared sacrificial offerings, slew an ox, a sheep, and a pig, and presented them at the tomb while he bowed and prayed. As soon as the ceremony was over the wind ceased to roar, and the dismal clouds began to disperse. There followed a cool breeze and a gentle drizzle. Presently the sky cleared. Pleased with the result of their prayer, the men of Wei bowed gratefully at the tomb and returned to camp.

That night Zhong Hui dozed off while resting by a small table in his tent. Suddenly a cool breeze began to blow, and he saw a figure walking into his tent, wearing a silk headdress and a cape of crane feathers, white shoes, and a black girdle, and carrying a feather fan in his hand. The countenance of the figure was fair as jade, the lips a deep red, and the eyes clear and bright. Tall in stature, he moved with the calm serenity of a god.

“Who are you, sir?” asked Zhong Hui, rising to welcome him.

“Thank you for your kindly visit this morning,” said the superior figure. “I have a few words to say to you. Though the fortune of the Hans has declined and the mandate of Heaven cannot be disobeyed, yet the people of the west, exposed to the inevitable miseries of war, are to be pitied. After you enter the country, do not slay unnecessarily by any means.”

As he finished these words, he disappeared with a flick of his sleeves.

Zhong Hui tried to get him to stay, but at that moment he awoke with a start. It was only a dream and he realized with amazement that the spirit of the great leader Zhuge Liang had paid him a visit.

He issued an order that the leading division of his army should bear a white flag on which was written the four words, SAFEGUARD STATE, COMFORT PEOPLE. He also threatened to execute any soldier who killed an innocent person. This humane decree was greatly appreciated by the residents in Hanzhong, who went out of the city to bow and welcome the northerners. Zhong Hui soothed the people, and his army committed no injury.

Those phantom soldiers around the Dingjun Hill
Moved Zhong Hui at Zhuge Liang's tomb to pray.
In life he furthered the cause of Liu Bei,
Though dead, he would Liu's people still protect.

On hearing that the invaders had come in full force, Jiang Wei at once dispatched urgent messages to his three officers Zhang Yi, Liao Hua, and Dong Jue, ordering them to assemble their troops for the war against the enemy, while he himself prepared his own army at Tazhong.

Soon they came, and he went out to encounter them. The leading officer of the Wei army was the Prefect of Tianshui, Wang Qi. Wang Qi rode out and shouted, "Our soldiers number a million and our officers, over a thousand. We are advancing in twenty divisions, and have already reached Chengdu. Yet you do not yield quickly and still try to put up a struggle. Are you ignorant of our divine mandate?"

Filled with fury Jiang Wei galloped straight at Wang Qi, his spear raised to strike. The prefect stood less than three bouts and fled defeated. Jiang Wei pursued him for twenty li, when he heard the familiar sounds of drums and gongs and a cohort spread out in front of him. On the banner he read the words QIAN HONG, PREFECT OF LONGXI.

Jiang Wei laughed. “Such lowly rats! They are no match for me!”

He led his men straight on and the enemy fell back. He chased them for another ten li, and there came Deng Ai. Rallying up his energy, Jiang Wei fought with Deng Ai for more than a dozen bouts but neither could overcome the other. Then sounds of drums and gongs arose in the rear of his force and Jiang Wei hastened to pull out of the battle. But at this moment the rear division reported that his camps at Gansong had been burned down by the prefect of Jincheng.

This news startled Jiang Wei, who at once ordered his lieutenants to keep his own standard flying and hold Deng Ai, while he himself hastened to the rescue of the camps with the rear division. There he ran into the prefect, who, however, dared not fight with Jiang Wei and escaped toward the hills. Jiang Wei followed but as he came near the hill, boulders and logs rained down, blocking his advance.

He turned to go back, but halfway he found that his men had been dispersed by Deng Ai. Then a large force of Wei came up and he was surrounded. However, Jiang Wei and his men broke through and hastened to the main camp to wait for rescue forces.

Suddenly scouts galloped up and reported: “Zhong Hui has seized Yangan Pass and the defending officer Fu Qian has died, but his colleague Jiang Shu has surrendered. Hanzhong is now in the possession of Wei. And on hearing of the loss of Hanzhong the commanding officers at Yuecheng and Hancheng also opened their gates and yielded to the invaders. Hu Ji alone was unable to withstand the enemy, so he has escaped to the capital to seek aid.”

Greatly upset by this report, Jiang Wei immediately ordered his men to break camp and set out for the frontier. That night he reached the mouth of the Jiang River. A troop barred his way, and at its head was the prefect of Jincheng. In a great rage Jiang Wei rode at him and sent him flying in the first exchange. As the prefect fled, Jiang Wei shot at him thrice, but missed all three times.

Exasperated, Jiang Wei snapped his bow and raised his spear to chase, but his horse tripped and fell, throwing Jiang Wei down to the ground. The prefect turned back to slay him but Jiang Wei, suddenly leaping up, thrust hard with his spear and wounded his opponent’s horse in the head. Wei troops rushed up and rescued the prefect.

Mounting another steed, Jiang Wei intended to continue his pursuit but was told that Deng Ai was approaching from behind. Realizing that he would be caught in between two forces, Jiang Wei collected his men in order to recover Hanzhong. However, he soon learned that his way back to Hanzhong had been blocked by another troop led by Zhang Xu, Governor of Yongzhou, so he halted and encamped in a strategic position in the hills. The Wei troops pitched their camps at the head of Yingping Bridge.

Advance or retreat being equally impossible, Jiang Wei sighed in anguish: “Heaven is destroying me!”

Ning Sui, one of his lieutenants, said, “Since our enemies are holding Yinping Bridge, they must have left a weak force in the city of Yongzhou. If you, General, cut through Konghan Valley to seize Yongzhou, they will be forced to abandon the bridge in order to rescue the city. When the bridge is clear, you can make a dash for the Sword Pass and fortify yourself there. Then Hanzhong can be recovered.”

Jiang Wei accepted this plan, and the army immediately marched toward the valley, feigning an advance on Yongzhou.

When Zhuge Xu, who was guarding the bridge, heard this from his scouts, he was much alarmed. “The defense of Yongzhou is my responsibility. If it is lost, I will be the one to blame.” So he left with most of his troops toward the south to rescue the city, leaving only a small force to hold his position at the bridge.

Jiang Wei marched along the northern trail for about thirty li when he retraced his steps, anticipating that Zhuge Xu must have abandoned the bridge by then. Turning his rearguard into a vanguard, he went swiftly back to the bridge, where he found that the main body of the enemy force had withdrawn, just as he had expected. Those left at the bridge were soon either slain or dispersed, and the camps razed to the ground. When Zhuge Xu learned about this he turned back, but by the time he got to the bridge the army of Shu had long passed and he dared not pursue.

Meanwhile Jiang Wei, after crossing the bridge, marched ahead. On the way he fell in with Zhang Yi and Liao Hua. Jiang Wei asked them the reason for their arrival.

Zhang Yi replied, “The eunuch Huang Hao believes in the words of a witch and refuses to send help to defend the frontiers. When I heard of the danger in Hanzhong I went there to rescue the city, but Yangan Pass had already been captured by Zhong Hui. Then I was told of your predicament, General, so I have come here especially to aid you.”

The two armies combined and marched together to White Water Pass.

Liao Hua said, “As we’re attacked all around, the grain route will be blocked. It seems to me it’s better to retreat to Sword Pass.”

But Jiang Wei was doubtful. Then they were informed that Zhong Hui and Deng Ai were approaching in ten divisions. Jiang Wei was inclined to resist, but Liao Hua said that the roads at White Water Pass were too narrow and too numerous to be suitable for fighting a battle, and again urged Jiang Wei to retreat to Sword Pass.

At last Jiang Wei consented, and the army headed for Sword Pass. But as they neared the pass they were greeted by the usual sounds of war and saw flags fluttering all around. A troop held the entrance to the pass.

Hanzhong’s strong defense was lost;
Storms gathered to threaten Sword Pass.

What force was holding the pass will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* Meaning “lame” or “unsuccessful.”

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

Deng Ai Slips Through Yinping Pass

Zhuge Zhan Fights to the Death at Mianzhu

The troops that had at first alarmed Jiang Wei turned out to be a force under General Dong Jue, who had come to defend the Sword Pass with his army of 20,000 men after he learned that more than a dozen Wei forces had entered his country. That day he saw swirls of dust rising in the distance and he hastened out to the entrance of the pass in fear that the enemy had already arrived. Then he rode forth to the front to find out who the newcomers were. He was overjoyed to see Jiang Wei and the others, and conducted them to the pass, where they exchanged formal greetings. Then he tearfully told them everything about the Second Ruler and the eunuch Huang Hao.

"Don't worry," said Jiang Wei to comfort him. "As long as I'm alive I will never allow Wei to devour our country. Let's guard the pass first and gradually work out ways to drive out the enemy."

"Though this pass is defensible, the capital is quite empty," cautioned Dong Jue. "If the enemy should attack it, all would collapse!"

“Chengdu is protected by natural defenses,” replied Jiang Wei. “It is hard to climb over the steep mountains and cross the dangerous roads. There is nothing to fear.”

At that moment it was reported that Zhuge Xu had come to challenge below the pass. Wrathfully, Jiang Wei rushed down with 5,000 soldiers and plunged straight into the Wei ranks, charging left and right and slaying a very large number of the enemy. Utterly smitten, Zhuge Xu retreated scores of li. The men of Shu captured many horses and weapons. Jiang Wei recalled his men and went back to the pass.

By then Zhong Hui had set his camp twenty li from the pass and Zhuge Xu came to admit his failure. Zhong Hui flared up in anger. “I commanded you to hold Yinping Bridge, to cut Jiang Wei’s way of retreat. Why have you lost the position? And now without my order you attacked and are therefore defeated.”

Zhuge Xu tried to defend himself. “Jiang Wei was very deceitful. He pretended that he was going to take Yongzhou. I was so worried about the safety of the city that I went to rescue it. And he took the opportunity to get away. I followed him to the pass, but unfortunately I was defeated.”

However, Zhong Hui showed no understanding but angrily ordered him to be put to death.

At this the army inspector Wei Guan tried to intercede. “Although Zhuge Xu is guilty, he is a subordinate of General Deng’s. If you kill him, it might hurt the general’s feelings.”

Zhong Hui replied, “I have a command from the Emperor and orders from the Duke of Jin to attack Shu—even if it were Deng Ai himself who committed the fault, I would behead him.”

All the others did their best to dissuade him. Finally he conceded and Zhuge Xu was put in a prisoner’s cage cart and sent to Luoyang, where his fate would be decided by Sima Zhao; his remaining men were added to Zhong Hui’s army.

All this was duly reported to Deng Ai, who became furious in his turn and said, “His rank and mine are the same. I have held a frontier post for years and done a great deal in the country’s service. Who is he that he gives himself such airs?”

His son Deng Zhong tried to appease his wrath. “Father, you know the saying, ‘A little impatience may upset a great design.’ Your quarrels with him will inevitably undermine important businesses of the country. I hope you will bear with him for the time being.”

Seeing the wisdom of his son’s words Deng Ai dropped the subject, but in his heart anger still burned. Then he rode to call upon his colleague, escorted by a dozen or so followers. When his arrival was announced, Zhong Hui asked his attendants how many men Deng Ai had brought with him.

“Only a dozen riders,” they replied.

Zhong Hui had several hundred men drawn up about his tent. Deng Ai dismounted and entered the camp, where he was welcomed into the main tent by his host and the two men saluted each other. Deng Ai quickly noticed that his rival’s

army was highly disciplined and he began to feel rather ill at ease. He decided to probe what plan Zhong Hui had in mind.

"General, your capture of Hanzhong is a great fortune for the state, and you can now settle on a plan to seize Sword Pass," he said provocatively.

"What is your own superior idea, General?" asked Zhong Hui.

Deng Ai repeatedly declined to answer, saying that he was incapable of suggesting any good plans, but Zhong Hui pressed him for a response.

"In my opinion," answered Deng Ai at last, "we might cut through some byroads around Yingping to get to Deyang in the Hanzhong region, from where we can direct a surprise attack on the capital, Chengdu. Jiang Wei will have to abandon this place to go to the city's rescue, and you, General, can easily take the Sword Pass. The victory will all be yours."

"An excellent plan!" exclaimed Zhong Hui in joy. "General, you lead your men there at once, and I will be waiting here for the good news of your success."

They had some wine together and then Deng Ai took his leave. After seeing him off, Zhong Hui went back to his own tent and said to his officers, "They say Deng Ai is able, but judging from what he said today I think he is but of mediocre talent."

When they asked him why he thought so, he continued: “The Yinping byroads are fringed by high mountains and steep hills, virtually impassable. Suppose the enemy posts some hundred men to hold the most critical points and seal off Deng Ai’s way of retreat, his men will all starve to death. I will go by the main roads, and there is no reason why I shouldn’t overcome Shu.”

So he prepared scaling ladders and ballistae to besiege Sword Pass.

Deng Ai went out of the main gate of Zhong Hui’s camp and mounted. Turning to his followers, he asked, “What does Zhong Hui think of me?”

They replied, “From his words and the way he said them, we think he held a poor opinion of your plan, General, and was only pretending to agree with you.”

“He thinks I can’t capture Chengdu, and that’s a good enough reason why I must take it.”

Back at his own camp, he was asked by his son and the others about his meeting with Zhong Hui.

“I told him what I really thought but he regards me as a man of inferior ability. He considers his capture of Hanzhong an incomparable feat. But how could he have succeeded if I had not engaged Jiang Wei in Tazhong? If I capture Chengdu now, it will be much better than taking Hanzhong.”

That night he ordered the camp to be broken, and his whole army set out toward the byroads around Yingping. About

seven hundred li from the Sword Pass the men encamped. Someone told Zhong Hui about this, but he only laughed at this unwise maneuver on the part of his rival.

From his camp Deng Ai sent a secret letter to Sima Zhao to report this. Then he called his officers to his tent and asked, “I intend to take Chengdu while it is still undefended, and success will mean unfading glory for us all. Will you follow me?”

“Yes, we will obey your orders,” they cried. “We will defy 10,000 deaths.”

Having obtained support from his officers, Deng Ai sent his son Deng Zhong with 5,000 men, wearing no armor but carrying axes and boring tools, for the task of improving the road at every dangerous point. They were to open up paths in the hills and build bridges over the streams to make it easier for the army to march. Then he picked 30,000 soldiers, all furnished with dry food and ropes, and advanced. After about a hundred li, he told 3,000 of his men to encamp where he left them; after another hundred li or so, another body of an equal number was told to camp on the road. The rest of the army marched on.

From the day they started from Yingping in the tenth month of that year, they had been continuously scaling sheer cliffs and passing narrow gorges for more than twenty days and had covered over seven hundred li of uninhabited country. After the many camps they set up on the way, they had only 2,000 men left by the time they reached a range called Mount Sky Scraping. As horses could not ascend the steep hill, Deng Ai

climbed up on foot. There he saw his son and all his road-building warriors weeping in grief.

When asked about the cause of their sorrow his son replied, "West of this mountain are numerous cliffs and precipices, impossible to cut a trail. All our labor has been in vain."

Deng Ai reproached his son. "We have traveled over seven hundred li to get here and just beyond the mountain is Jiangyou. How can we pull back?"

Turning to the soldiers, he added, "How can one get tiger cubs without entering a tiger's lair? You and I have journeyed all the way here, and if we succeed we will share the fortune and the glory."

"At your orders, General," they all pledged.

Deng Ai told his men to throw their weapons down the cliff; then he wrapped himself in blankets and rolled down the rock face. Following their commander's example, the officers who had blankets also rolled down, while the others let themselves down one after another by tying cords round their waists and clutching at branches or trees. Thus Deng Ai, his son, the 2,000 soldiers, and the road-building warriors all passed Mount Sky Scraping.

As they put on their armor and picked up their weapons to continue, they suddenly noticed by the roadside a stone slab on which were inscribed the words, "Composed by Zhuge Liang, Prime Minister and Marquis of Wu." The poem read:

At the start of two fires,
Someone will here stop by;
Two warriors compete
But soon both will die.*

Deng Ai was very much startled to read the inscription. Hastily he dropped to his knees and bowed again and again before the stone slab, saying, "The marquis is a real god. How I grieve that I could not study under him."

The rugged peaks of Yinping pierce the sky,
Even cranes are afraid to scale their heights.
Deng Ai in blankets wrapped rolled down the steep,
But the great Zhuge had foreseen this feat.

Having slipped through Yingping without being discovered, Deng Ai continued to move forward. Presently he came to a roomy camp, empty and deserted. He was told that when Zhuge Liang was alive he had posted a thousand men as a garrison at this dangerous point, but later the Second Ruler had abandoned the camp. Deng Ai heaved long sighs, amazed at the foresight of the great strategist.

He said to his men, "Now retreat is impossible! There is no road back. Ahead lies the city of Jiangyou, where food is plentiful. Advance and you live, retreat and you die. You must fight with all your strength."

"We will fight to the death," they cried.

So without delay Deng Ai and his 2,000 men, all on foot, marched as quickly as they could to seize Jiangyou.

The commander at Jiangyou was Ma Miao, who had heard of the fall of Hanzhong and had made some preparations for defense, but he had only guarded against the coming of the enemy from the main road. In fact, he did not really take his military duties seriously, trusting that Jiang Wei was holding the Sword Pass with his whole force.

One day after returning from drilling his troops, he had some wine with his wife by the stove.

"I hear the situation at the borders is most critical," asked Lady Li, his wife. "How is it that you are not worried at all?"

"Such important business is Jiang Wei's concern," he replied. "What's that to do with me?"

"But you are defending this city, which is a heavy responsibility."

"Well, the Emperor listens only to the eunuch Huang Hao and is sunk in dissipation. I reckon disaster is very close, and if the Wei army reaches here it is better to yield. So why worry?"

Lady Li was indignant. She spat at her husband's face and reproached him, "You are a man yet you harbor such disloyal and treacherous thoughts. What a waste for the state to give you rank and office! How can I ever look upon your face again?"

Ma Miao was too ashamed to attempt a reply. Just then his servants hurried in to tell him that Deng Ai had suddenly

emerged from nowhere with his 2,000 men, and had already broken into the city.

Startled, Ma Miao hastily went out to submit. He prostrated himself on the ground of the official building and said, weeping, “I have long desired to come over to Wei. Now I am willing to persuade the town’s people and my own force to surrender to you, General.”

Deng Ai accepted his surrender and took him into his service as a guide. The local force was incorporated with his own.

Suddenly it was reported that Lady Li had hanged herself. Deng Ai asked Ma Miao for the reason and was told the truth. Out of admiration for her virtue, Deng Ai gave orders for an honorable burial and went in person to offer sacrifices. The other men of Wei also sighed in sorrow when they heard of her noble conduct.

The King wandered in his way and the House of Han fell,
The Lord sent Deng Ai to smite the land.
Pity this country, with so many warriors of renown
But none was as noble as the lady of Jiangyou town.

Then Deng Ai sent for his troops that had been left camping along the byroads and soon all of them assembled at Jiangyou. His next target was Fucheng.

But one of the officers, Tian Xu by name, objected: “After such a perilous mission the men are fatigued beyond measure. We ought to rest for a few days to recover and then advance.”

Deng Ai angrily replied, “Speed is the very soul of war. How dare you try to stir up discontent?”

He ordered Tian Xu to be put to death, and pardoned him only after incessant pleading from the other officers.

Then he marched his men to Fucheng. Their attack was so sudden that all officials, soldiers, and people within the city surrendered, believing that Deng Ai could only have fallen directly from the sky. News of the capture of these two places was quickly sent to the capital, and the Second Ruler began to feel alarmed. He hastily called in Huang Hao, who at once denied the report.

“This must be a rumor,” replied the eunuch. “The wise woman and her god would never deceive Your Majesty.”

The Second Ruler sent for the wise woman but she was nowhere to be found. In the meantime, urgent memorials fell in from far and near like snowflakes, and messengers went to and fro in constant streams. The Second Ruler called a court meeting to discuss ways to avert the danger, but the courtiers looked at each other in dismay, unable to suggest any plan.

Finally Xi Zheng spoke out: “Disaster is imminent! Your Majesty should call in the son of the late prime minister for advice.”

This son of Zhuge Liang was named Zhuge Zhan. His mother, Lady Huang, daughter of Huang Cheng-yan, was extraordinarily talented, though quite plain in looks. She had a good understanding of the ways of the stars and the features of the terrain. She was well versed in all kinds of books on

military strategy and divination. While he was living in Nanyang Zhuge Liang had heard of her talents and proposed to marry her. Zhuge Liang owed much to her for his range of knowledge. She had survived her husband but a short time, and her last words to her son had been to be loyal and filial.

Zhuge Zhan had been known as a clever lad and had married a daughter of the Emperor, so that he became an imperial son-in-law. Later he inherited his father's title as Marquis of Wuxiang, and had received a general's rank as well. But he had retired to his home, claiming illness, when Huang Hao started meddling in state affairs.

Following Xi Zheng's advice, the Second Ruler issued three edicts and summoned Zhuge Zhan to court. Weeping, the Second Ruler said, "Deng Ai is encamped in Fucheng and the capital is in crisis. For your father's sake, please come and save my life."

Zhuge Zhan also wept and said, "My father and I received so much kindness from the late Emperor and generosity from Your Majesty that no sacrifice is too great for me to render. Pray give me command of all the troops in the capital, and I will fight to the finish with the enemy."

So the soldiers, 70,000 in all, were placed under his command. When he had taken leave of the Second Ruler, he collected his troops and called the officers together.

"Who dares to lead the van?" asked Zhuge Zhan.

A young officer came forth and said, "Father, as you have taken command, I will be the van leader."

It was his eldest son, Shang, then just nineteen. He had studied military books and made himself an adept in martial arts. His offer pleased his father very much, and so he was appointed van leader. The army left the capital to meet the enemy.

In the meantime the traitor, Ma Miao, had presented Deng Ai a book of maps, showing all the mountains, rivers, and roads that lie along the three hundred and sixty li route from Fucheng to Chengdu. The maps also indicated clearly whether these natural barriers and roads were wide or narrow and where the dangerous points lay. Deng Ai was alarmed after studying the maps.

"We can't just stay here and hold Fucheng," he said. "If the men of Shu hold the hills in front of the city we will fail. And if we delay further Jiang Wei will arrive and our army will be threatened."

He at once called in his son and Shi Zuan to whom he said, "Take a troop and go straight to Mianzhu to keep back any Shu soldiers sent to stop our march. I will follow as soon as I can. But hasten—if you let the enemy forestall you and seize the strategic points, I will put you to death."

They went as commanded. Nearing Mianzhu, they came upon the army commanded by Zhuge Zhan. Both sides deployed for battle. As the two Wei officers reined in their horses beneath the standard, they saw their opponents had arrayed their men in eight lines. After three drum rolls, the banners of the Shu formation opened in the center, and there emerged a four-wheeled chariot, escorted by dozens of officers, in which sat a figure who looked exactly like Zhuge Liang, with his

silk headdress, the feather fan, and the Taoist robe. Beside the chariot rose a yellow standard embroidered with the words: ZHUGE LIANG, PRIME MINISTER OF HAN AND MARQUIS OF WU.

The sight scared the two Wei officers, who broke out in a cold sweat of terror. Turning to their men, they cried, "So Zhuge Liang is still alive—we are doomed!"

Hastily they retreated. The men of Shu came on, and the army of Wei was driven away in defeat and chased a distance of twenty li. There the pursuers sighted Deng Ai coming with reinforcements and halted. Both sides called off the battle.

When Deng Ai had camped, he called the two officers before him and reproached them for retreating without fighting.

"We saw Zhuge Liang leading the Shu army," said Deng Zhong, "so we ran away."

"What do I fear, even if Zhuge Liang comes back to life again? Your retreat without cause has resulted in this defeat. I must execute both of you at once to observe the military law."

The other officers pleaded earnestly for them, and finally Deng Ai's wrath was mollified. Then he sent out scouts to reconnoiter, who returned to say that the commander of the Shu army was the son of Zhuge Liang, and the van leader his grandson, while the figure on the carriage was a wooden image of the great strategist.

Deng Ai said to his son and Shi Zhan: “Success or failure depends on this battle. If you lose again you will certainly lose your lives with it.”

At the head of 10,000 men they went out to battle once more. On the Shu side, Zhuge Shang, grandson of Zhuge Liang, rode out alone boldly. Bracing himself, he repulsed the two Wei officers. At Zhuge Zhan’s signal the two wings charged into the Wei line, dashing to and fro dozens of times, and the men of Wei suffered another major defeat with heavy casualties. Both officers being wounded, they fled, and the army of Shu pursued for more than twenty li before encamping to hold the invaders at bay.

The two Wei officers returned to see Deng Ai, who could not bring himself to punish them, seeing that they were wounded.

To his officers he said, “Shu has Zhuge Zhan to continue his father’s work with skill. Twice he has beaten us and slain over 10,000 of our men. We must defeat him quickly or calamity will await us.”

Qiu Ben said, “Why not send him a letter to draw him out?”

Taking his advice Deng Ai wrote the letter, which was delivered to the Shu camp by a messenger. The warden of the camp gate led the messenger in to see Zhuge Zhan, who opened the letter and read:

> General Deng Ai, Conqueror of the West, writes to General Zhuge Zhan: Having carefully observed the talented men of the present time, I can find none equal to your most honored father. From the day he

left his cottage he had predicted that the country was to be divided into three kingdoms. Then he conquered Jingzhou and Yizhou, thus establishing a separate rule for Liu Bei. Few could match his achievements in all history. Later he launched six expeditions from Qishan, and, if he failed to reach his goal, it was not that he lacked skill but that it was the will of Heaven.

Now your Emperor is foolish and weak, and his fortune as a ruler has come to an end. I have been commanded by the Son of Heaven to lead a mighty force to smite Shu with severity, and I have already captured most of the country. The fall of your capital is a matter of days. Why not abide by the will of Heaven and fall in with the desire of men by acting rightly and coming over to our side? I will obtain for you the rank of Prince of Langya, whereby your ancestors will be glorified. This is not an empty promise. Pray give my proposal a favorable consideration.

The letter threw Zhuge Zhan into fury. He tore it to fragments and ordered the bearer to be put to death immediately. The poor man's head was sent back to the Wei camp and laid before Deng Ai, who was provoked to anger and wished to go forth at once to battle.

But Qiu Ben said, "Do not go out rashly to battle. You must overcome him by surprise attacks."

So Deng Ai laid his plans. He sent Wang Qi, Prefect of Tianshui, and Qian Hong, Prefect of Longxi, to place their men in ambush, while he led the main body.

Zhuge Zhan was just going to challenge for battle when he was told that Deng Ai had approached with his army. Angrily he led out his army and rushed into the midst of the invaders. Deng Ai fled as though worsted, so luring on Zhuge Zhan. But as he pursued, there suddenly appeared the two forces lying in ambush and the men of Shu were defeated. They retreated into Mianzhu, which was immediately besieged by the order of Deng Ai. The men of Wei, shouting in unison, closed in around the city, making it like an air-tight iron barrel.

Seeing how desperate the situation had become, Zhuge Zhan ordered an officer named Peng He to break through the siege to deliver a letter to the ruler of Wu, asking for assistance. Peng He fought his way through and reached Wu, where he presented the letter to Emperor Sun Xiu.

After reading the letter the Emperor assembled his courtiers and said to them, “Since the land of Shu is in danger, I cannot sit and look on unconcerned.”

He decided to send 50,000 troops, over whom he set the veteran general Ding Feng as chief commander and two other officers as his assistants. Taking the order, the old general told his two lieutenants to move toward Mianzhong with 20,000 men, while he himself advanced toward Shouchun with the rest of the army. Marching in three divisions the army of Wu went to the rescue of their ally.

In the city Zhuge Zhan, seeing no relief force, said to his officers, “This long defense is not a good policy.”

Leaving his son and another officer in the city, Zhuge Zhan put on his armor and led his front, center, and rear troops to burst out of the three gates to confront the invaders. At this Deng Ai drew off and Zhuge Zhan pursued him vigorously. But all of a sudden there was an explosion and the Shu general was quickly surrounded. In vain he thrust right and shoved left, killing hundreds of his enemies. Deng Ai ordered his men to shoot and the flight of arrows scattered Zhuge Zhan’s men, who fled. Before long, Zhuge Zhan was shot by an arrow and fell from his horse.

“I have no more strength left to fight,” he cried. “I will die for my country.”

So he drew his sword and slew himself.

From the city walls his son Shang saw that his father had died on the battlefield. In a rage he girded on his armor and mounted his horse to go forth to fight.

“Don’t venture out in such haste,” cautioned one of the other officers.

“My grandfather, my father, and I have received much favor from the state,” sighed Zhuge Shang. “Now that my father has died in the battle against the enemy, can I still live?”

He whipped his horse and dashed out into the thick of the fight. He, too, died on the battlefield. A poem was written to praise the father and son.

Do not think that the loyal officers lacked skill;
But Heaven had decreed against the house of Liu,
Years before Zhuge Liang had left his fine offspring,
Who preserved his nobleness and loyalty well.

To mark their loyalty, Deng Ai had the father and son buried together.

To follow up this success he began to storm the city. The three officers in the city, each leading a troop, made a sortie. However, they were outnumbered and their effort availed to nothing, and all three officers sacrificed their lives in the battle. Thus the city of Mianzhu fell. After rewarding his men, Deng Ai set out for the capital Chengdu.

Observe the Second Ruler of Shu in his last days of rule,
How similar he was to Liu Zhang when compelled to resign.

The fate of Chengdu will be told in the next chapter.

Footnote

* The first line, "At the start of the two fires," refers to the first year of the period Yan Xing in Shu (A.D. 263). The Chinese word for "Yan" is made of the two characters for "fire," while that of "Xing" means "beginning." The second line, "Someone will here stop by," predicts the coming of Deng Ai. The third and fourth lines indicate that Deng Ai and Zhong Hui rival each other but will soon die.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN

Weeping at the Ancestral Temple, a Filial Prince Dies

Entering the West, Two Generals Fight for Merits

In the Shu capital of Chengdu the Second Ruler was seized with panic when he heard of the fall of Mianzhu and the death in battle of Zhuge Zhan and his son. He hastened to summon a general council.

One of the courtiers said, “Outside the city people are all fleeing for their lives, taking their young and old with them. Their cries of woe shake the country.”

Hearing this the Second Ruler became even more alarmed. Soon reports came that the enemy was approaching the city. Many courtiers advised flight.

“We have few officers and men to counter the enemy. It is better to abandon the city and flee to the seven districts of the south. The terrain is dangerous and easily defended. We can get the Mans to help us recover the territory.”

But Qiao Zhou was opposed to this proposal. “No, that will not do,” he said. “The Mans are out-and-out rebels. Besides, we have not shown them any favor over the years. It will be a calamity if we seek their help now.”

Then some officials proposed seeking refuge in Wu. “Wu is our ally. In this most critical situation we can go there for shelter.”

But Qiao Zhou was also opposed to this. “In the whole course of history, no emperor has ever sought shelter in another state. So far as I can see, Wei will eventually absorb Wu, but not vice versa. To declare yourself a servant to Wu is a humiliation already. It will double the humiliation if Your Majesty has to bow to Wei again when Wu is devoured by Wei. Hence, it is better to yield to Wei, but not to Wu. Wei will surely split its territory and give Your Majesty an estate. Your Majesty will be able to preserve the ancestral temple on the one hand, and protect the people on the other. Pray reflect upon this.”

Unable to make up his mind, the distracted ruler retired into his palace.

The next day the same issue was discussed in court and opinions differed widely among the courtiers. Qiao Zhou, who saw how desperate the situation was, presented a written memorial urging the Second Ruler to yield to Wei. The Second Ruler accepted it and decided to submit.

But from behind a screen stepped forward a man, who reproached Qiao Zhou severely: “You cowardly pedant! How dare you utter such nonsense over the fate of a dynasty? Never in history has any emperor yielded to an enemy!”

The speaker was Liu Chen, fifth son of the Second Ruler and Prince of Beidi. The Second Ruler had seven sons, but all

were weaklings except Liu Chen, who had showed exceptional intelligence from childhood.

The Second Ruler turned to his son and said, “The ministers all agree that surrender is the best policy. Yet you alone say otherwise, relying on the boldness of youth. Do you want to drench the city in blood?”

The prince said, “During the reign of the late Emperor, this Qiao Zhou had no voice in state policies. Now he improperly discusses the fate of the dynasty, using the most subversive language. This is outrageous. I know for certain that we still have tens of thousands of troops in the city, and Jiang Wei’s whole army is stationed in the Sword Pass. He will hasten to our rescue as soon as he hears of the enemy’s assault on the capital. Then we can join him in attacking the enemy from both the front and rear. Success will be ours. How can Your Majesty listen to the words of this degenerate pedant and abandon so lightly the kingdom founded by the late Emperor?”

The Second Ruler scolded his son angrily: “Be silent! You are too young to understand the decree of Heaven.”

The prince, weeping, beat his head upon the ground and implored his father to be strong. “If we have exhausted all our efforts and yet are unable to alter the situation, then when disaster is imminent both of us, father and son, ruler and his servant, should fight one last battle, with our backs against the city, and die for the dynasty. Thus we will be able to meet the late Emperor unashamedly in the afterlife. Why should we surrender?”

But the appeal left the Second Ruler unmoved. The prince lamented bitterly, “It is with great pains that the late Emperor founded this kingdom. What a shame to give it up in one day! I would rather die than suffer the disgrace!”

The Second Ruler told the courtiers to push the young man out of the palace. Then he ordered Qiao Zhou to prepare the letter of surrender. When it was written, Qiao Zhou and two others were sent to offer submission to Deng Ai, taking with them the letter and the imperial seal.

Meanwhile, Deng Ai had hundreds of horsemen ride to Chengdu daily to reconnoiter the city. It was a happy day for him when they returned to report sighting the flag of surrender hoisted over the city wall. Soon the three Shu envoys arrived and were welcomed. Kneeling below the steps of the hall, they presented the letter of surrender and the imperial seal. Deng Ai read the letter with great exultation and accepted the seal. He treated the envoys very courteously and asked them to take back a letter to allay the anxiety of the people in the Shu capital. In due time they returned to the city, presented Deng Ai’s letter to the Second Ruler, and related in detail how well they had been treated at the Wei camp. The Second Ruler read the letter with much satisfaction and at once sent Jiang Xian with an edict to the Sword Pass, commanding Jiang Wei to surrender without delay.

Next he ordered a minister named Li Hu to submit to Deng Ai the census records and a statement of the resources of the kingdom. Altogether there were 280,000 households, 914,000 male and female civilians, 102,000 armored men of all ranks, and 40,000 civil employees. Besides, there were 400,000 catties of grain, 2,000 catties each of gold and silver, and

200,000 rolls of silk of various types. There were also other items in the various storehouses, but there was not enough time to have them enumerated. The first day of the twelfth month of the year (A.D. 264) was chosen for the Second Ruler and his officials to go out of the city to surrender.

The Prince of Beidi was beside himself with rage when he heard of all this. Sword in hand, he entered the palace.

His wife Lady Cui asked him, "My lord, you look terribly angry today. What's troubling you?"

The prince replied, "The army of Wei is coming at any minute, and my father has offered to surrender. Tomorrow he and all his ministers are going out of the city to submit formally, and that will be the end of our dynasty. But rather than bend the knee to another, I will die first to meet the late Emperor in the realms below."

"How noble, my lord! A most worthy death, indeed!" said Lady Cui. "But let me die first before you, my lord, depart."

"But why should you die?"

"You, my lord, die for your father and I, for my husband. One principle guides both. When the husband dies the wife follows. No question is necessary."

So saying she dashed her head against a pillar, and so killed herself. Then the prince slew his three sons and cut off the head of his wife. Bearing the head of the princess in his hand, he went to the temple of the late Emperor Liu Bei, where he knelt down and said tearfully: "I will be ashamed to witness

the surrender of our kingdom to an enemy. Therefore I have slain my wife and sons so as to rid myself of all worries. And now I will give my own life to you, grandfather. If your spirit can hear me, you will read my heart."

After this pronouncement he wept so copiously that blood ran from his eyes—then he cut his throat with his own sword. The men of Shu grieved deeply for him, and a poet celebrated his noble deed in a poem:

Both king and courtiers, willing, bowed the knee,
Except for one prince alone, who was grieved.
The western Shu ceased to exist any more;
A noble prince stood forth, for e'er renowned.
He took his own life to save his forebear's shame
In deep sorrow he wept beneath the blue sky.
His heroic image seems to be with us still
Who can say that Han has perished.

When the Second Ruler knew of the suicide of his son, he sent men to bury him.

The next day the main body of the Wei army came up. The Second Ruler, leading his Heir Apparent, his other sons, and all his courtiers to the number of more than sixty, went out ten li from the north gate to bow their heads in submission. The Second Ruler bowed to the ground, his face turned to the victor, his hands tied behind his back, with a carriage bearing a coffin standing by his side. With his own hands Deng Ai helped the yielding Emperor, Liu Shan, to his feet, untied the cords binding his hands, and burned the coffin.

Then the victorious general and the vanquished Emperor rode back into the city side by side.

Into Shu marched the troops of Wei,
But too cowardly was its ruler to end his own days.
Without doubt Huang Hao was a traitor to his state;
In vain Jiang Wei had the talents his land to save.
How noble was the heart of the faithful warrior!
How sad was the prince's will to die than to bear the shame
Of the dynasty his ancestor fought so hard to found!
A lifetime's effort was brought to nought in one day.

The common people welcomed the men of Wei into the city with burning incense. The title of General of Cavalry was given to Liu Shan, the Second Ruler of Shu, and other ranks were given to the officials who had surrendered. Then he was asked to return to his palace and issue a proclamation to reassure the people. The granaries and storehouses were duly submitted to the conquerors. Two Shu officials were sent into the provinces to explain the new situation and call upon the local officers and people to surrender to Wei. Another envoy was sent to exhort Jiang Wei to yield. A report of the success was sent to Luoyang.

Huang Hao's wickedness was reported to Deng Ai, so he decided to put the eunuch to death. However, by bribing Deng Ai's close attendants Huang Hao escaped the death penalty.

Thus perished the House of Han. Reflecting on its end, a poet recalled the exploits of Zhuge Liang in the following poem.

Apes and birds feared his written commands.
And clouds and winds used to help him in his defense.

But for naught did he bid his fine officers wield their mighty pens
I see the fallen king born away to an alien land in the end.
In gifts Zhuge was a peer of Guan Chong and Yue Yi;
But little could he do, with Guan and Zhang no more.
Some other year pass his shrine at Jinli I may
The elegy composed, my sorrow will remain.*

In due time the envoy reached the Sword Pass and gave the general the Second Ruler's command to surrender to the invaders. Jiang Wei was so shocked that he could not even utter a word. All his officers ground their teeth with rage and mortification, their eyes glaring and their hair standing on end. Drawing their swords they slashed at stones and shouted, "We are here fighting so desperately. Why should he surrender first?"

The roar of their angry lamentation was heard for scores of li. Seeing how loyal they were to the House of Han, Jiang Wei soothed them: "Don't grieve, gentlemen. I have a plan to restore the House of Han."

All of them wanted to know his plan. Jiang Wei whispered something in their ears.

He ordered flags of surrender hoisted up all around the Sword Pass, and sent a messenger to Zhong Hui's camp to announce that he would lead his chief officers there to submit. Zhong Hui was overjoyed to hear this and sent his men to welcome them in.

"Why have you been so long in coming?" said Zhong Hui when Jiang Wei came.

With tears in his eyes, Jiang Wei said seriously, “With the whole army of the state in my command, my coming here today is far too soon.”

Amazed at his remark, Zhong Hui stepped down from his seat and bowed to him. He treated Jiang Wei as an honored guest.

Jiang Wei said persuasively, “I hear that since you left Huainan, General, you have accomplished all your plans. The Sima family owes to your efforts for their good fortune, and so I am willing to bow my head to you. Had it been Deng Ai, I would have fought him to the death. I would never surrender to him.”

Zhong Hui broke an arrow in two, and swore brotherhood with Jiang Wei. He became very intimate with Jiang Wei and let him retain the command of his own army, at which the latter secretly rejoiced. The envoy was sent back to Chengdu.

As conqueror, Deng Ai arranged for the administration of the newly-gained territory. He made Shi Zuan Governor of Yizhou and appointed others to various posts. He also built a tower in Mianzhu to honor his conquest and gave a great banquet, to which he invited many former Shu officials.

In the middle of the banquet Deng Ai said patronizingly, pointing at his guests: “You are lucky to have met me. If it were some other general you would all have been put to death.”

The officials rose in a body to bow to him in gratitude. Just at that moment the envoy returned from the Sword Pass to say that Jiang Wei and his army had surrendered to Zhong Hui.

The news stirred up a deep hatred in Deng Ai's heart for Zhong Hui, so he wrote a letter to Sima Zhao in Luoyang.

"Your servant Ai thinks that in war military threats should precede an actual attack. Now that we have overcome Shu it seems the best time to wipe out Wu. But after a major campaign, both officers and men are weary and unfit for immediate service. It is better to employ 20,000 men of the Longyou force and an equal number of the newly acquired Shu forces to produce salt,* smelt iron, and build ships to be ready for an expedition down the river. When these preparations are complete, send an envoy to Wu to explain the real situation to its ruler and that country can be subdued without a battle.

"At present it is advisable to treat Liu Shan, the Second Ruler of Shu, well so as to placate Sun Xiu, Emperor of Wu. If Liu Shan were to be removed to the capital now, the men of Wu, apprehensive of what might happen to them, would not be persuaded to yield to our rule. Therefore I will keep him here temporarily and send him on to the capital by winter next year. Let him be created Prince of Fufeng at once and granted a sufficient revenue to support his attendants, while his sons be given noble ranks, thus demonstrating that favorable treatment follows submission. The men of Wu will yield to us out of their fear of our might and respect of our virtue."

Having read this, a deep suspicion rose in Sima Zhao's heart that Deng Ai intended to establish his own authority, so he first wrote a private letter to the army inspector, Wei Guan, and then sent an edict to the successful general. The edict ran as follows:

General Deng Ai has performed a glorious service, penetrating deeply into an enemy country and forcing a usurping potentate to submission. His army moved in good time and the battle was finished within the day. Swiftly the clouds of war rolled away and the regions of Ba and Shu were conquered. His merit surpasses that of Bai Qi, who subdued the mighty state of Chu, and of Han Xin, who overcame the powerful kingdom of Zhao. He is hereby created Tai-yu, and bestowed a fief of 20,000 households, and his two sons are to be ennobled, each with a fief of one thousand households.

After Deng Ai received the edict Wei Guan produced the letter from Sima Zhao, in which he said that Deng Ai's proposals were yet to be brought to the attention of the Emperor of Wei and forbade him to act on his own without permission.

Deng Ai said, "A general in the field may disobey the order of his prince. I have the Emperor's command to conquer the west—why should he hinder me from carrying out my proposals?"

So he wrote a reply and sent it to the capital by the hand of the envoy. Meanwhile, in Luoyang courtiers all claimed that Deng Ai intended to rebel, and their words deepened Sima Zhao's suspicion of his general. At this time the envoy returned with Deng Ai's letter, which read:

> I, Ai, was commissioned to lead the expedition to the west. Now that the chief of our enemy has submitted it is appropriate to take expedient measures to pacify those who have recently joined our cause. To await government orders for every

> step means long delays. As the Spring and Autumn Annals instructs us, "When a minister is abroad, he has the authority to do whatever is of benefit to the security of the throne and the state."
>
> Now Wu, still unconquered, is bound to align with Shu, and we must not lose a good opportunity by sticking to conventional rules. The Art of War says, "To advance without thinking of personal gain, and retreat without shirking the blame." Though I do not possess the fortitude of the ancients, I will not undermine the benefit of the state because of fears for my own reputation.

In his alarm Sima Zhao turned to Jia Chong for advice. "Deng Ai presumes upon his merits and has become very arrogant. He makes decisions on his own and ignores my orders. It is evident that he is going to revolt. What is to be done?"

"Why not confer high ranks on Zhong Hui to control him?" replied Jia Chong.

Sima Zhao accepted the suggestion and issued an edict raising Zhong Hui to the rank of Si-tu. At the same time he ordered Wei Guan to inspect the troops of both Deng Ai and Zhong Hui. He also wrote privately to Wei Guan, asking him to collaborate with Zhong Hui and keep a watch upon Deng Ai, to guard against his attempt to revolt.

The edict sent to Zhong Hui read as follows:

General Zhong Hui, Defender of the West, is invincible against any enemy, whose strength, mightier than all,

conquers every city, and from whose wide net no one escapes. Even the arrogant commander of the Shu army humbly submitted to him. His plans never fail and his undertakings always succeed. Therefore he is hereby promoted to the rank of Si-tu and marquis of a fief of 10,000 households. His two sons are to be ennobled with a fief of one thousand households each.

After receiving the edict Zhong Hui called in Jiang Wei and said to him, “Deng Ai has rendered a greater service than me and has been created a Tai-yu, but now Sima Zhao suspects him of rebellion and has ordered Wei Guan to superintend his army and send an edict to me to keep him in check. Have you any superior advice for me, Bo-yue?”

Jiang Wei replied, “They say Deng Ai came from a family of humble origins and in his youth he tended cattle. Now due to some good luck he managed to win this great merit by climbing cliffs to cut across Yingping. This is not the result of his able plans but the good fortune of the state. How could he have succeeded if you, General, had not been compelled to hold me in check at the Sword Pass? He now wants the Second Ruler of Shu to be created Prince of Fufeng so as to win the hearts of the people of the west. Isn’t it obvious that he intends to rebel, even though he does not openly declare it? The Duke of Jin has every reason to suspect him.”

Zhong Hui was much pleased to hear these words. Jiang Wei continued, “Please send away your attendants. I have something to say to you in private.”

When they were alone, Jiang Wei drew a map from his sleeve and spread it before Zhong Hui, saying: “At the time when he

had left his cottage, the late Marquis of Wu (Zhuge Liang) gave this to the First Ruler of Shu and told him that Yizhou was well-fitted to be an independent state, with its thousand li of fertile land and its prosperous population. Following his advice the First Ruler set up the Kingdom of Shu in Chengdu. Now that Deng Ai is there it is small wonder that he has lost his balance."

Zhong Hui, exhilarated, asked many questions about the features of the hills and rivers, and Jiang Wei explained in full.

"How can we get rid of Deng Ai?" asked Zhong Hui in the end.

"The Duke of Jin is now having serious doubts about him," replied Jiang Wei. "You can take this opportunity and send a memorial at once to report Deng Ai's rebellious behavior. The duke will order you to suppress the rebel and you can easily destroy him."

Zhong Hui took the advice and immediately sent a messenger to Luoyang to deliver a memorial, which said that the revolt of Deng Ai was but a matter of time and accused him of monopolizing power, acting arbitrarily, and befriending the men of Shu. At this news the court was much disturbed. Then to support his charges, Zhong Hui had his men intercept Deng Ai's memorial to court and rewrite it in his handwriting with arrogant and rebellious language. This forged memorial greatly angered Sima Zhao, who at once sent someone to Zhong Hui, commanding him to go and arrest Deng Ai. Next he sent Jia Chong to lead 30,000 men to Ye Valley, with he

himself and the Emperor of Wei personally taking part in the expedition.

Shao Ti said, “Zhong Hui’s army outnumbers that of Deng Ai by six to one and is quite sufficient to arrest Deng Ai. Why is it necessary for Your Lordship to go, too?”

“Have you forgotten what you said before?” said Sima Zhao, smiling. “You said Zhong Hui would be a danger one day. My purpose in going is not because of Deng Ai, but for Zhong Hui.”

“I feared lest you had forgotten,” said Shao Ti, also smiling, “so I ventured to remind you. But the matter must be kept secret.”

The expedition set out. Jia Chong by this time also grew suspicions of Zhong Hui, and he spoke of his fears in secret to Sima Zhao, who replied, “If I sent you to deal with Deng Ai, should I doubt you then? All will be clear when I get to Chang’an.”

Sima Zhao’s arrival at Chang’an was reported to Zhong Hui, who at once called in Jiang Wei to consult him about how to capture Deng Ai.

Here in Shu he was victorious, an Emperor had to yield;
There from Chang’an came a mighty army, he the victim would be.

Jiang Wei’s plan to arrest Deng Ai will be related in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Written by Li Shang-yin (A.D. ?813–?858), a well-known poet from the late Tang Dynasty. In the poem, Guan and Zhang refer to Guan Yu and Zhang Fei.

* Shu, or modern Sichuan in southwestern China, is a major producer of well salt.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN

A False Desertion Ends in a Vain Attempt

A Second Abdication Imitates the First

When asked about a plan to arrest Deng Ai, Jiang Wei said, "First send the army inspector Wei Guan to arrest Deng Ai. If Deng kills Wei, it will show his revolt. Then you, General, can lead your army to suppress him."

Hence Wei Guan was ordered to leave for Chengdu with several dozen followers to arrest Deng Ai and his son. Wei Guan's own men saw through what was behind this order and urged him not to go, but he assured them that he knew what to do.

Wei Guan prepared a written command to Deng Ai's officers, which said, "I have an edict to arrest Deng Ai, but not the other officers. If you come over to my side quickly you will be rewarded. Those of you who dare to stay behind will be exterminated with their entire clans."

A score or so copies of this command were sent to Deng Ai's subordinates. Then Wei Guan prepared two cage carts and at once started toward Chengdu.

The written command proved very effective. By cockcrow, all those who had read it went to bow before Wei Guan. Deng Ai was still asleep when Wei Guan rushed into his residence, crying, “I have orders to arrest Deng Ai and his son!”

Deng Ai was so startled that he tumbled off his bed. In a minute he was seized, securely bound, and pushed into one of the prison carts. Deng Ai’s son came out to inquire, but was also made prisoner and thrust into another cart. This sudden action shocked the officers and officials at the house, who were on the point of snatching their commander from his captors when they saw swirls of dust outside and scouts reported that Zhong Hui’s army was close at hand. They scattered to flee.

Zhong Hui and Jiang Wei dismounted at the gates and entered the house, where they saw both the Dengs bound. Zhong Hui whipped Deng Ai on the head and face and abused him: “You cowherd! How dare you?”

Jiang Wei also cursed: “See what your adventure has brought you today, you fool!”

Deng Ai also cursed them in return. Zhong Hui sent both the prisoners to Luoyang and then entered Chengdu. He absorbed all Deng Ai’s men into his own army, and became all the more powerful.

“Today at last I have attained the dream of my life,” said Zhong Hui to Jiang Wei.

Jiang Wei replied, “Han Xin did not heed Kuai Tong’s advice and so lost his life at the Weiyang Palace;* Wen Zhong would

not follow Fan Li's advice to retire on the five lakes and ended in dying under his own sword.† Both of them had attained very high positions, but they did not scent danger early enough and hence failed to take timely actions. Now you have won the most glorious accomplishment and your prestige overshadows that of your master. Why not sail off in a boat and disappear? Why not go to Mount Ermei and wander freely with the immortal Chi Song-zi?"‡

"No, I don't think so," replied Zhong Hui with a smile. "I'm not yet forty, and I should be thinking of moving ahead. How could I follow the leisurely life of a hermit?"

"If so, then you must quickly plan your course well. You're wise enough to do that and don't need an old fool like myself to tell you."

Clapping his hands and laughing, Zhong Hui said, "How well you read my thoughts, my friend!"

From then on, the two became daily absorbed in planning their grand scheme. Jiang Wei secretly wrote a letter to his former lord, asking the Second Ruler of Shu to put up with humiliation for a few more days, and assuring him that he would turn danger to the throne into safety and let the sun and moon emerge out of dark clouds and shine again. "I will never allow the House of Han to be wiped out!" he declared at the end of the letter.

While Zhong Hui and Jiang Wei were planning a revolt against Wei there suddenly arrived a letter from Sima Zhao. Zhong Hui took the letter, which said: "I am afraid you may

not be able to subdue Deng Ai so I have camped my army at Chang'an. This is just to inform you that we will meet soon."

Zhong Hui became quite alarmed after reading this brief letter. "My army outnumbers that of Deng Ai greatly and if he only wants me to seize Deng Ai, he knows well enough that I could handle it easily. Now his appearing with an army means he suspects me."

He again consulted Jiang Wei, who said, "When the master suspects his official, that official must die. Have you forgotten about Deng Ai?"

"My mind is made up," replied Zhong Hui. "Success, and the empire is mine; failure, and I will retreat into Shu and I can be another Liu Bei."

Jiang Wei said, "Empress Dowager Guo has died only recently. You can pretend she left you a command to destroy Sima Zhao, to punish him for the murder of the late Emperor. With your talents you will sweep clean the northern land."

"Then you must be the van leader," said Zhong Hui. "When success is ours we will share the glory and wealth."

"I'm willing to render what little service I can offer," said Jiang Wei. "But I'm afraid your officers may not agree."

"Tomorrow is the Lantern Festival. We can have lanterns put up all over the former Shu palace for celebration and invite all the officers to a banquet. We will kill all those who refuse to follow us."

His words filled Jiang Wei's heart with a secret joy.

On the following day the officers were invited to the feast. After several rounds of wine, Zhong Hui suddenly lifted his cup and wept. All were surprised and asked him the reason for his grief.

Zhong Hui replied, "I have here an edict from the late Empress Dowager before her death, commanding me to punish Sima Zhao for his treasonous crimes of slaying the late Emperor at the south gate and plotting to usurp the throne. I want you all to put down your names and join me in this task."

Astounded, the officers stared at each other, not knowing how to respond. Zhong Hui drew his sword and cried, "Whoever disobeys must die!"

All of them were intimidated and, one by one, they signed their names to pledge allegiance. As further security, they were all kept prisoners in the palace under careful guard.

"They are not really with us," said Jiang Wei. "Please bury them."

"I have ordered my men to dig a great pit in the palace," replied Zhong Hui. "And I have thousands of clubs ready. Those who disobey will be clubbed to death and buried in the pit."

Qiu Jian, one of his trusted officers, was present when he said this. He had once served under Hu Lie, who was among the

imprisoned officers, and he secretly informed his former chief of Zhong Hui's words.

Hu Lie wept and said, "My son is in command of a force outside the city. He will never suspect Zhong Hui capable of such a crime. I beg you to consider our old friendship and break the news to him. Then I will have no regrets, even if I die."

"Have no anxiety, sir," replied Qiu Jian. "Let me find a means to do that."

He went to Zhong Hui and said, "My lord, you are holding the officers in captivity, and it is inconvenient for them to get food and water. Will you not appoint someone to supply their needs?"

Zhong Hui always listened to Qiu Jian, so he made no difficulty about this request. He told Qiu Jian to see to it himself, saying, "I am placing a great responsibility in you, and you must never let the secret out."

"Rest assured, my lord. I know how to keep a strict watch."

But he secretly confided in a close follower of Hu Lie's. The man was given a letter, which he swiftly delivered to his master's son, Hu Yuan, in his camp outside the city.

Much alarmed, Hu Yuan showed the letter to his colleagues in other camps and they were all enraged. They went to Hu Yuan's tent to discuss the matter.

"We would rather die than obey a rebel," they said.

Hu Yuan said, “We can make a surprise attack on the eighteenth day of the month.”

Then he explained in detail his plan, which won the support of the army inspector Wei Guan, who got his men ready and ordered Qiu Jian to inform Hu Lie what was afoot. Hu Lie told his fellow captives.

Now Zhong Hui had dreamed of being bitten by many serpents, and he asked Jiang Wei to explain this vision. Jiang Wei replied that dreams of dragons and snakes were exceedingly auspicious. Zhong Hui was only too ready to accept this interpretation.

“The clubs are all ready,” said Zhong Hui. “What about letting the officers out and question them?”

“They are opposed to us and will surely stir up trouble later. It’s better to slay them all quickly.”

Zhong Hui agreed and told Jiang Wei to take armed guards to execute the captives. But just as he was starting out, Jiang Wei was seized with a sudden pain of the heart, so severe that he fainted. The attendants helped him up but he did not revive until after a long while. Then suddenly a tremendous hubbub arose outside the palace. Zhong Hui at once sent someone to find out its cause, but at that moment cries of war shook the earth and multitudes of troops rushed up from every direction.

“That must be the officers in mutiny,” said Jiang Wei. “Slay them at once.”

But it was reported that the troops had already entered the palace. Zhong Hui ordered the gates to be closed and told his men to climb up to the roof to pelt the incoming soldiers with tiles. Dozens were slain on either side.

Then fire broke out on all sides outside the palace and the assailants broke open the gates. Zhong Hui drew his sword and slew several, but was shot by an arrow and he fell. His enemies hacked off his head.

Jiang Wei, taking his sword, ran up the hall and fought the enemy on every side. But unfortunately he suffered another heart spasm.

Turning to Heaven, he cried, “My plan has failed. This is the will of Heaven.”

These were his last words. He put an end to his life with his own sword. He was fifty-nine years old.

Several hundred were slain within the palace. Wei Guan presently ordered the soldiers to return to their various camps to await the orders of the Emperor. The soldiers of Wei, out of revenge, slit open the abdomen of Jiang Wei and found his gall as large as an egg. They also seized and slew Jiang Wei’s family members.

Seeing that Deng Ai’s enemies had perished, his former subordinates hastened to chase the cage carts to rescue him. When Wei Guan heard of this, he feared for his own life.

“I was the one who arrested him,” said Wei Guan. “If he gets free it means my death.”

Tian Xu said to him, “When Deng Ai took Jiangyou he wished to put me to death. It was only after the pleading of my comrades that he let me off. This is the moment for my revenge.”

So at the head of five hundred men Tian Xu went in pursuit of the cage-carts. He caught up with them at Mianzhu, where he found that the two prisoners had just been released from the carts and were on their way to Chengdu. When he saw Tian Xu, Deng Ai assumed that his own troops had come up, so he took no precaution to defend himself. Before he could ask any questions he was cut down by Tian Xu, whose men fell upon the son, Deng Zhong, and slew him also. Later a poem was written to lament over Deng Ai:

From early years he could scheme and plan;
He was an able commander as a man.
The earth could hide no secrets from his eye,
With equal skill he read the starry sky.
Mountains and hills cleft as his horse rode up
And roads opened when his troops arrived.
But foulest murder closed a great career,
His soul curls amid the mist o’er River Han.

A poem was also composed in lamentation for Zhong Hui:

Of mother-wit Zhong had no scanty share,
And in due time at court did office bear.
His subtle plans shook Sima’s hold on power,
He was well named the Zi-fang* of the hour.
At Shouchun he won renown for his schemes,
In Sword Pass he displayed his martial skills.

Ambitious, he would not in the hills roam;
Now his wandering spirit grieves for home.

Another poem, in pity of Jiang Wei, runs:

Tianshui boasted of a distinguished hero,
Liangzhou produced an unusual talent.
For ancestor he claimed the famed Jiang Shang,†
And in skill he was tutored by Zhuge Liang,
So valiant was he that he feared nothing,
Always pressing forward and never returning,
Grieved were the generals of Han
When he died in Chengdu that day.

And thus died three great warriors. Zhang Yi and some other officers also perished in the fight. Liu Rui, the Heir Apparent, and Guan Yi, grandson of Guan Yu, were both killed by Wei troops. A great confusion followed and there were clashes between the army and the people, resulting in numerous deaths.

Ten days later Jia Chong arrived. He put out notices to pacify the people and order was finally restored. He left Wei Guan in defense of the city of Chengdu and took the captive Second Ruler to Luoyang. Few officials accompanied the deposed Second Ruler on this disgraceful journey. Liao Hua and Dong Jue pleaded illness as an excuse not to go. They died of grief later.

At this time the reign-style of Wei was changed from the fifth year of Jing Yuan to the first year of Xian Xi. In the third month of that year, Ding Feng, the veteran general of Wu,

seeing that Shu had already been destroyed, called back his relief force and returned to his own country.

At the Wu court, an official named Hua Jiao said to the Emperor, "Wu and Shu were as close as are lips and teeth, and 'when the lips are gone the teeth are cold.' Without doubt Sima Zhao will attack us at any moment. I beg Your Majesty to strengthen the defenses to guard against his invasion."

The Emperor shared his view, so he appointed Lu Kang, son of the able commander Lu Xun, General–Guardian of the East, Prefect of Jingzhou, and entrusted him with the defense of the Yangtze. General Sun Yi was sent to hold the strategic points in and around Nanxu. As a further precaution hundreds of camps were set up along the riverbanks, with the veteran general Ding Feng in full control, to guard against Wei troops.

When Huo Yi, Prefect of Jianning, heard that Chengdu had fallen, he put on a mourning robe of white and, facing west toward the capital, he wept for three days.

"Now that the Emperor has lost his throne, why not surrender at once?" suggested his officers.

Huo Yi replied in tears, "With all links cut, I don't know the fate of our lord, whether he is safe or not. If the ruler of Wei treats him with courtesy, then it will not be too late for me to yield the city. But if the captors put him to shame, then it is my duty to die, but not to surrender."

The others agreed and a man was sent to Luoyang to find out the fate of their former ruler.

It happened that when Liu Shan, the Second Ruler, reached the capital of Wei, Sima Zhao had already returned from Chang'an. At court Sima Zhao upbraided him: "You indulged yourself in dissipation, dismissed the wise, and misgoverned your country. For these faults you ought to be executed."

Hearing this, Liu Shan turned ashen with fear, not knowing how to respond.

But the courtiers said, "Although he has misruled his country, he has fortunately rendered a timely surrender. He now deserves pardon."

Following their counsel Sima Zhao created Liu Shan Duke of Anle (Comfort), and assigned him a residence and a revenue, as well as a gift of 10,000 rolls of silk and a hundred maids and servants. His son, Liu Yao, and the officials who had accompanied him into exile were given noble ranks. Liu Shan thanked him and took his leave. But Huang Hao, for the crimes of undermining the country and oppressing the people, was cruelly put to death in public. When news of all this reached Huo Yi, Prefect of Jianning, he came with a retinue to yield to Wei.

The next day Liu Shan went to the residence of Sima Zhao to express his gratitude again, and the latter gave a banquet to entertain him. At the banquet music and dances from Wei were performed first and all the guests from Shu felt sad—except Liu Shan, who looked quite at ease. Then Sima Zhao had artists from Shu perform their own dances and music before the guests. As they watched tears rolled down their faces, but their lord, utterly unaffected, laughed merrily.

After drinking for some time, Sima Zhao said to Jia Chong: "How un-feeling he is! Even if Zhuge Liang had lived, he could not have maintained his rule for long, let alone Jiang Wei."

Turning to Liu Shan, Sima Zhao asked, "Do you miss Shu?"

"I am so happy here that I do not miss Shu at all," replied Liu Shan.

Presently Liu Shan rose and left the table for a while. Xi Zheng followed him outside and said, "How could you say that you do not miss Shu, Your Majesty? If he asks you again, say in tears, 'The tomb of my father is far away in Shu and not a single day passes without my heart grieving for the west.' Then he will let you return to Shu."

Liu Shan memorized his words and went back to the banquet table. When he was a little intoxicated with wine, Sima Zhao raised the same question again, to which Liu Shan replied as he had been instructed. He also tried to weep, but failed to produce a tear, so he shut his eyes.

"How come you sound so much like Xi Zheng?" remarked his host.

"Yes, it is just as you say," replied Liu Shan in surprise, opening his eyes.

Sima Zhao and his attendants all laughed. This convinced Sima Zhao of Liu Shan's honesty and felt that he had nothing to fear from him.

He pursued pleasure and joy, his face lit with smiles;
Ne'er did he have the slightest grief for his lost empire.
Happy in an alien land, his home state out of his mind.
How unfit he was to sit on the throne, all said.

The courtiers of Wei thought that so grand an exploit as the conquest of the west was worthy of higher honor, so they petitioned the ruler of Wei to confer a princedom on Sima Zhao. At that time, Cao Huan ruled in name only, for all matters of the state were decided by Sima Zhao, whose will the Emperor himself dared not cross. And so, in due course, Sima Zhao became Prince of Jin.

Sima Zhao's wife was the daughter of Wang Su. They had two sons. The elder son was named Sima Yan, who was a man of a very powerful build, his flowing hair reaching to the ground when he stood up, and his arms hanging below his knees. He was intelligent, handsome, and very brave. The second son, Sima You, was of a mild disposition, a filial son, and a dutiful brother. His father loved him dearly. As Sima Shi had no heir, this youth became his adopted son to continue the family line.

Sima Zhao respected his elder brother very much and used to say that the empire belonged to his brother. Therefore after he received the prince-dom, he wanted to name his younger son his heir.

"It is improper to cast aside the elder and set up the younger," objected one of his followers. "It will only cause trouble."

Jia Chong and two others argued in the same strain. "Your elder son is intelligent and imperial in appearance, with

talents beyond his age. Men place high hopes in him and Heaven bestows him majestic looks. He is certainly destined not to serve under another."

Sima Zhao hesitated. But two other officials of rank also expressed their opposition. "In former dynasties, the installing of a younger son resulted in trouble for the country. Pray reflect upon this."

Finally persuaded, Sima Zhao named his son Yan his successor.

At court a high-ranking official addressed Sima Zhao: "Some time ago a giant descended from the sky in the town of Xiangwu. The figure was twenty feet (six meters) tall and his footprint measured over three feet two inches (one meter). He had white hair and a hoary beard. He wore an un-lined yellow robe and a yellow scarf. In his hand he held a black-handled staff to help him walk. This extraordinary man declared, 'I am the king of men and I have a message for you: When a change of ruler occurs, peace will reign at once. Then he roamed the town for three days and then suddenly vanished.

"Evidently this indicates felicity to yourself, Your Highness. Now you should wear the imperial headdress with twelve strings of pearls, raise the imperial banner, and have the roads cleared when you go out. You should ride in the golden-shafted carriage with six horses. Your consort should be styled 'Queen' and your heir the 'Heir Apparent.'"

Sima Zhao was greatly pleased in his heart. He returned to his palace, but just as he was going to have his meal, he suddenly had a stroke and lost all speech. By the following day he was

dying. Many court officials, led by the three most important courtiers Wang Xiang, He Zeng, and Xun Kai, came to inquire after his health, but he could not say a word. He pointed at his heir, Sima Yan, then died. It was the twenty-eighth day of the eighth month.

He Zeng said, "The care of the state devolves upon the Prince of Jin—let us first put his heir in place. Then we can arrange for the funeral."

Thus Sima Yan was set up in his father's place. He Zeng was appointed prime minister and three others were given important posts. The posthumous title of "Prince Wen" was conferred upon his late father, Sima Zhao.

After the funeral rites were performed, Sima Yan summoned Jia Chong and Pei Xiu into his palace and said, "Cao Cao once said, 'Even if Heaven's mandate rests upon me, I will be another Duke Wen of Zhou.'* Did he really say that?"

Jia Chong replied, "Cao Cao and his ancestors had long been in the service of Han. He said these words because he feared lest posterity should reproach him with usurpation. It was apparent that he intended to let his son Cao Pi become emperor."

"How did my father compare with Cao Cao?" asked Sima Yan.

Jia Chong answered, "Although Cao Cao excelled in his achievements, yet people feared him for his power and credited him with no virtue. His son Cao Pi succeeded him, during whose rule forced labor was common and people were

driven hither and thither without any peace for a single year. Later your grandfather and your uncle repeatedly scored great successes and treated the people with compassion, who had long regarded them as their leaders. Your late father overcame Shu in the west and his merit surpassed all throughout the country. How could Cao Cao compare with him?"

Sima Yan said, "Cao Pi could continue the rule of Han—can I not continue that of Wei?"

The two counselors bowed low and said, "It is perfectly right that Your Highness should take as a precedent Cao Pi's inheritance of the rule of Han and do as he did. Erect an altar, make a proclamation to the whole country, and ascend the throne."

Sima Yan was delighted. The next day he entered the palace armed with his sword. Cao Huan, the Emperor, had held no court for several days, for he was feeling ill at ease and full of dread. When Sima Yan appeared, the Emperor hurriedly rose from his place and advanced to welcome him.

Sima Yan sat down and asked, "By whose efforts did Wei win the kingdom?"

"By the efforts of the father and grandfather of the Prince of Jin," replied the Emperor.

Sima Yan smiled. "Your Majesty, you have neither the talent of a scholar to run a government nor the skill of a commander to defend a kingdom. Why not step down and let another who is more able and virtuous rule?"

The Emperor was dumbfounded. Beside him stood an official named Zhang Jie, who cried, “You are wrong to speak like this. In the old days, Emperor Wu (Cao Cao) fought east and west, north and south, and won the kingdom by strenuous efforts. The present Emperor is virtuous and without fault. Why should he yield his place to another?”

Sima Yan replied angrily, “The imperial right belongs to the Hans, and Cao Cao coerced the Emperor and controlled the lords. He made himself Prince of Wei and usurped the throne of Han. Three generations of my forefathers upheld the house of Wei. It is well known that they owe their kingdom to the efforts of us Simas, and not to their own abilities. Am I not entitled to continue the rule of Wei?”

“If you do this you will be a traitor who usurped the throne,” Zhang Jie said, denouncing him.

Sima Yan flared up in wrath. “I am avenging the Hans. What is wrong with that?”

He ordered guards to drag Zhang Jie down and beat him to death. The Emperor, weeping, knelt down and pleaded.

Sima Yan rose and left. The Emperor turned to Jia Chong and Pei Xiu. “This is a crisis. What should I do?”

They replied, “Your Majesty, the spell of your good fortune is over and you cannot oppose the will of Heaven. You must abdicate as Emperor Xian of Han once did. Rebuild the altar of abdication and prepare a great ceremony to formally request the Prince of Jin to accept the throne, so as to comply

with Heaven's mandate and satisfy the desire of the people. Moreover, your personal safety will be guaranteed."

The Emperor could only accept this advice, and Jia Chong was entrusted with the building of the altar. The first day of the twelfth month was chosen for the ceremony. On that day the Emperor stood on the altar, with the imperial seal in his hand, in the presence of a great assembly.

As Wei displaced Han, so Jin devoured Wei.
Thus turns fate's wheel, none its grinding escapes.
Zhang Jie the true stood in the way and died.
Vain hope with one small hand to block out Mount Tai!

Then Sima Yan was requested to ascend the altar, and there received the seal. Cao Huan then descended and took his place at the head of the assembly, dressed in a robe that befitted his new role as an official.

Sima Yan now sat upright on the altar, while Jia Chong and Pei Xiu stood on his two sides, sword in hand. Cao Huan was ordered to prostrate himself and listen to the command.

Jia Chong read: "Forty-five years have elapsed since in the twenty-fifth year of the period of Jian An Wei inherited the throne from Han. But the favor of Heaven has left Wei and reverted to Jin. The merits and virtues of the Sima family reach to the high heavens and pervade the earth. The Prince of Jin is fitted for the throne and so to continue the rule. Now you are given the title of Prince of Chenliu; you are to proceed at once to reside in the city of Jinyong. You are forbidden to come to the capital unless summoned."

Cao Huan thanked the new Emperor and withdrew tearfully.

Weeping, Sima Fu (uncle of Sima Zhao) bowed before the deposed Emperor and promised eternal devotion. “I have been a servant of Wei and will never betray it.”

Seeing this, the new Emperor conferred the title of Prince of Tranquillity to Sima Fu, but he refused and withdrew.

The new Emperor was now seated in his place, and all the officials and officers bowed before him and shouted again and again: “Long live the Emperor!”

Thus Sima Yan succeeded to the throne. The new dynasty was called Great Jin and a new reign title, Tai Shi, or Great Beginning, was chosen. An amnesty was declared. Wei was no more.

Jin took Wei as a model,
And Prince of Chenliu resembled Lord of Shanyang
A transfer of power at the altar again was seen
We grieve when we recall these deeds.

The new Emperor conferred posthumous imperial titles upon his late grandfather, uncle, and father—Sima Yi (the “Original Emperor”), Sima Shi (the “Wonderful Emperor”), and Sima Zhao (the “Scholar Emperor”). He built seven temples in honor of his ancestors, dedicated to Sima Jun, Sima Liang, Sima Jun (Sima Liang’s son), Sima Fang, Sima Yi, Sima Shi, and Sima Zhao. All these, except his uncle, were in his own direct line of ancestry.

All these things being accomplished, the new Emperor held court daily to discuss how to subjugate Wu.

The House of Han was gone for ever;
And Wu would quickly follow.

The story of the attack upon Wu will be told in the next chapter.

Footnotes

* Han Xin, a famous general who helped the founder of Han to win his empire, was advised by Kuai Tong to set up his own rule while he commanded the army but Han Xin failed to heed his words. Later he was deprived of his military power and he tried to rebel, but was killed at Weiyang Palace.

† Wen Zhong and Fan Li were both officials of the Kingdom of Yue in ancient China. They helped their king destroy the Kingdom of Wu. Knowing that the king was not someone with whom one could share joy, Fan Li left to seek a life of leisure. Wen Zhong, however, did not follow his advice and was later forced to commit suicide.

‡ A god-like figure in ancient Chinese legends. The Han minister Zhang Liang allegedly went to Mount Ermei in southwestern China to study Taoism with Chi Song-zi after he had helped Liu Bang establish the Han Dynasty.

* Familiar name for Zhang Liang, chief advisor to the founder of Han Dynasty.

† Another name for Lu Shang, chief advisor to the founder of Zhou Dynasty.

* The leader of the house of Zhou at the end of Shang Dynasty (16th–11th century B.C.). Although he had amassed a large territory he still pledged allegiance to the emperor of Shang. Later his son destroyed Shang and founded the Zhou Dynasty.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY

Recommending Du Yu a Veteran Offers New Plans

Sun Hao Surrenders and the Three Kingdoms are Reunited

When the Emperor of Wu learned about Sima Yan's usurpation he knew that his own land was threatened by an invasion. The anxiety led to an illness and he was confined to his bed. Before his death he summoned to his side Prime Minister Puyang Xing, and told his heir Sun Wan to bow to the minister. The dying ruler, with his final effort, took the minister by the arm and pointed at his son. Then he died.

Puyang Xing left the chamber and called a meeting of the officials, to whom he proposed placing the heir on his father's throne.

General Wan Yu objected, arguing, "He is too young to rule the government. Better to set up Sun Hao, Marquis of Wucheng."

This proposal won the support of another general, Zhang Be, who said, "Sun Hao is able and quick in decision-making. He is fit to be a ruler."

However, Puyang Xing could not decide and so he went into the palace to consult the Empress Dowager.

“Settle this among yourselves,” she replied. “I am but a widow and know nothing of such matters of the dynasty.”

So Sun Hao was welcomed into the capital. He was the son of Sun He, who was formerly Heir Apparent of Sun Quan, and in the seventh month he was enthroned as Emperor of Wu, and the first year of his reign was Yuan Xing. The young prince Sun Wan was consoled with the title of Prince of Yuzhang. His father Sun He was honored posthumously with the title of Emperor Wen and his mother was created Empress Dowager. The veteran general Ding Feng was made Minister of War.

The following year the reign title was changed to Gan Lu, or Sweet Dew. The new ruler soon proved himself to be cruel and tyrannical, and he grew more so from day to day. He indulged in alcohol and lust and had as his confidant a eunuch named Cen Hun. When Puyang Xing and Zhang Bu remonstrated, both were put to death, along with their entire clans. That sealed the mouth of every courtier and thereafter none dared to voice any criticism.

Another reign title, Bao Ding, was adopted the next year, and two officials, Lu Kai and Wan Yu, were appointed left and right prime ministers. At this time the imperial residence was in Wuchang. The people of Yangzhou had to send supplies upstream against the current and suffered exceedingly. There was no limit to the ruler’s extravagance—the public treasury was cleaned out and the income of private households was exhausted.

At length Lu Kai ventured to present a memorial:

"No natural calamity has fallen upon the land yet the people starve; no public work is in progress, yet the treasury is empty. I am bitterly distressed. In the past, after the fall of the House of Han the three kingdoms maintained a tripartite rule of the empire. But as a result of their own folly, the houses of Cao and Liu have lost their kingdoms to Jin. This is clearly a lesson for us today. Foolish I may be, but I would protect the state for Your Majesty's sake. The land here in Wuchang is rugged and futile, not suitable as a royal capital. Besides, children in the street are chanting: 'Better to drink the water of Jianye than eat the fish of Wuchang, better to die in Jianye than to live in Wuchang.' This shows the longing of the people as well as the will of Heaven. Now the country does not have enough supplies in store for a year's use, and all resources will soon be exhausted. The officials of all grades are vexed and distressed with exorbitant taxes.

"In the times of the Great Emperor (Sun Quan), the palace women totaled less than a hundred, but the number has increased to a thousand since the days of Emperor Jing (Sun Xiu). This is the most extravagant waste of money. Moreover, Your Majesty is surrounded by unsuitable attendants, who are split into cliques, and plot to harm the loyal and drive away the virtuous. All these things undermine the state and weaken the people. I beg Your Majesty to reduce all forms of forced labor and remove grievances for taxes, decrease the number of palace women, and purge the court of dishonest officials. This will please Heaven, win the support of the people, and ensure the security of the state."

But the Emperor was displeased, and instead of reforming his ways he began yet another large project for the building of a new palace, even ordering the officials of the court to go to

the hills to collect timber for the construction. He also called in a soothsayer and told him to divine for him to find out if he could attain the whole empire. The soothsayer reported a very propitious sign and assured the Emperor that he, riding in his chariot with the green canopy, would enter Luoyang in the year of geng-zi.* And the Emperor was pleased.

He said to Hua He, "The late Emperor listened to your advice and sent officers to place hundreds of defensive camps along the river, with the veteran general Ding Feng in over all command. Now I desire to seize the former territory of Shu to avenge the wrongs of the ruler of Shu. Which place should be my first target?"

Hua He replied, "Now that Chengdu has fallen and the throne there has been overturned, Sima Yan will assuredly desire to absorb this land. Your Majesty should cultivate virtue to placate your people. That would be the best policy. If you insist on waging war it will be like throwing hemp to put out a fire and the result can only be your own destruction. Pray consider this carefully."

But Sun Hao exploded, "I desire to take this opportunity to restore the old heritage yet you utter such ill-omened words? Were it not for your long service, I would slay you and expose your head as a warning."

He ordered his guards to hustle the minister out.

Leaving the court Hua He sighed: "It is a shame that 'ere long our beautiful country will pass to another."

From then on he shut himself inside his house and did not attend court. Then the Emperor ordered General Lu Kang to camp his army at the entrance of the Yangtze in order to attack Xiangyang.

Spies reported this in Luoyang and it was forwarded to Sima Yan, ruler of Jin. When he heard that the army of Wu threatened to invade Xiangyang he called a council.

Jia Chong stood forth and said, “I hear Sun Hao is devoid of virtue and indulges himself in vice. Your Majesty should command Yang Hu to hold this army at bay, and let him attack when internal troubles arise in Wu. Victory will then be easy.”

Delighted with this proposal, Sima Yan sent an envoy to Xiangyang with an edict ordering Yang Hu to oppose the Wu army. Consequently Yang Hu mustered his troops, ready to meet the foe.

Yang Hu had been well-loved by his army and the people since he came to defend Xiangyang. Whenever men of Wu who had previously yielded wished to return to their own country, he would allow them to leave. He also reduced the number of soldiers on patrol duty. Instead, he set his men to till the soil, and they cultivated an extensive area of eight hundred hectares. When he first arrived the army did not even have grain for a hundred days, but by the end of a year he had a ten-year reserve of provisions.

When he was with his army Yang Hu often wore a light fur coat bound by a broad sash and no armor. His personal guards numbered only about a dozen.

One day his officers came to his tent to say that spies spotted great laxity in the enemy's camp, and they wished to attack.

But Yang Hu replied, "You mustn't underestimate Lu Kang, for he's a very good strategist. Formerly his master sent him to attack Xiling, and he slew Bu Chan and many of his officers. I was too late to save them. So long as he remains in command I will remain on the defensive. I won't attack till there is trouble and confusion among our enemies. To be rash and not await the proper moment to attack is to invite defeat."

They found his words wise and only strove to defend their own boundary. One day Yang Hu and his officers went out to hunt, and Lu Kang happened to have chosen the same day to embark on a hunting expedition.

Yang Hu gave strict orders to his men not to cross the boundaries, and so they hunted only in the territory of Jin, never straying into that of Wu.

Lu Kang sighed. "General Yang has maintained a strict discipline over his men. We can't attack him."

In the evening, after both parties had returned, Yang Hu ordered an inspection of the slaughtered game and sent over to the other side any that had been first struck by the men of Wu.

The men of Wu were greatly pleased and went to report this to Lu Kang, who sent for the bearers of the game and asked, "Does your officer drink wine?"

They replied, "Only when it is really good wine."

“I have some very old wine,” replied Lu Kang, smiling. “I am going to ask you to take it to your general as a gift. Tell him that I have brewed the wine for my own consumption, and I am sending him this in return for his courtesy during yesterday’s hunt.”

The bearers promised to deliver his message and left with the wine.

“Why do you give him wine?” asked Lu Kang’s officers.

To their amazement, he replied, “Well, I can’t accept his courtesy without offering him something in return.”

The bearers of game returned with the wine and told their commander everything Lu Kang had said. Yang Hu said with a smile, “So he knows I can drink.”

He had the jar opened and the wine poured out to drink.

“This might be a trick,” cautioned an officer. “General, you should not drink it right now.”

“Lu Kang is no poisoner,” replied the general.

And he finished the whole jar. The friendly contact thus begun continued, and messengers frequently passed from one camp to the other.

One day Lu Kang sent a messenger to inquire after Yang Hu, who asked, “Is General Lu well?”

The man said that Lu Kang had been ill for several days.

“I think he suffers from the same ailment as me,” said Yang Hu. “I have some remedies ready prepared. Take some to him.”

The man took the medicine back to see Lu Kang, whose officers were suspicious: “Yang Hu is our enemy. His medicine is surely harmful.”

But Lu Kang replied, “How can Yang Hu be a poisoner? Have no suspicions.”

He drank the concoction. The next day he was feeling quite well, and when his staff came to congratulate him he said, “If he tries to use virtue to counter our violence, he will defeat us without fighting. Now let us see to the safety of our own boundaries and not try to gain any slight advantage.”

The officers all obeyed his command. Soon after, a special envoy from the Emperor of Wu came. Lu Kang welcomed him and asked him the purpose of his visit.

“The Emperor commands you to start an offensive, and not to let the men of Jin invade us first.”

“You may return and I will send a memorial immediately,” replied Lu Kang.

The envoy left. Soon a memorial was written and sent to the Wu capital. Some courtier presented it to the Emperor, who opened it and read the text. The memorial listed in detail the reasons why Jin could not be attacked then, and exhorted the Emperor to exercise a benign rule and reduce punishments. It also implored him to consider domestic security more

important than military expansion. The memorial threw the Emperor in a rage and he cried, “I hear he has come to an understanding with the enemy, and this proves it!”

Then he deprived Lu Kang of his military power and degraded him in rank. Another general, Sun Ji, was sent to supersede Lu Kang. None of the courtiers dared to intervene.

As time went on the Emperor of Wu grew still more tyrannical and arbitrarily changed the reign title twice more. By the first year of the reign period of Phoenix (A.D. 272) he had become more capricious and vicious, dispatching troops for border defenses. Everyone in the state, officials as well as common folks, moaned with distress. At last, three high-ranking officials, led by the senior prime minister, boldly and earnestly remonstrated with the Emperor for his many wrongdoings, but they were all put to death. Within ten years or so more than forty loyal officials died at his hands. He also maintained an extravagantly large guard of 50,000 mailed cavalrymen, who often escorted him when he went out. The court officials lived in mortal terror and none dared to remonstrate with him.

When Yang Hu heard of the removal of Lu Kang from his command and the tyranny of the ruler of Wu, he knew that the time had come to overcome Wu. Therefore he sent a memorial to Luoyang to request permission to attack Wu. It ran briefly as follows:

“Although fortune is bestowed by Heaven, yet achievements depend upon human efforts. Now the land of Wu is not as dangerous as that of the Sword Pass in Shu, while the brutality of Sun Hao exceeds that of Liu Shan. The troubles of

Wu are more serious than those of Shu whereas our armies are stronger than ever before. If we miss this opportunity to bring the whole land under one rule, but continue to send troops to confront our enemy at the borders, our country will be under the burden of constant expeditions. The days of prosperity will give way to decline and our rule will not endure."

Sima Yan was pleased to read this and he decided to give consent for the army to move. But Jia Chong and two other officials were strongly opposed to it, and he changed his mind. When Yang Hu learned that his proposal was rejected by the Emperor, he was disappointed.

"How often things go against one's wish!" he sighed. "What a great pity to miss this Heaven-sent opportunity!"

In the fourth year of the period Xian Ning in Jin, Yang Hu went to court and asked to retire on account of his ill health. Before granting him leave to retire, Sima Yan asked him for advice to secure the safety of the state.

Yang Hu replied, "Sun Hao is a very cruel ruler and Wu could be conquered without fighting. If unfortunately he were to die and a wise successor sat upon the throne, it would not be easy for Your Majesty to gain possession of Wu."

The wisdom of his words suddenly dawned on Sima Yan. "Suppose you lead the army to attack it now?"

"I am now too old and too ill for the task," replied Yang Hu. "Please choose another bold and resourceful general."

He left the court and returned to his home. Toward the end of the year he was critically ill, and the Emperor went to visit him in his home. The sight of the Emperor at his bedside brought tears to the eyes of the old soldier.

"If I died a myriad times, I could not have repayed Your Majesty," said the sick man.

The Emperor also wept. "I deeply regret that I cannot use your strategy to attack Wu. Who now is there to carry out your design?"

The sick general replied tearfully, "I am dying and must be wholly sincere. General Du Yu is the right man for the task. He should be employed if Your Majesty is going to attack Wu."

Sima Yan said, "It is a good thing to bring worthy men into prominence. But why did you submit a memorial recommending certain men to court and then burn the draft so that no one would see it?"

The dying man answered, "I deem it despicable to recommend someone in open court and then receive his thanks in private."

With these words he died. Sima Yan wailed in sorrow for him, and when he returned to his palace he conferred on the dead general the posthumous rank of Tai-fu and the title of marquis. His death was mourned everywhere. People in Nanzhou closed their shops and wept; officers and men guarding the frontier in the south wailed for him; and inhabitants of Xiangyang, recalling how he loved to visit the

Xian Hills, built there a temple and set up a tablet to his memory and submitted sacrifices regularly at the four seasons. Passersby were moved to tears when they read the inscription on the tablet, which came to be named "Tablet of Tears." In later times a poet visited the temple and composed these lines to his memory:

One morning, moved by his memory, I climbed the hill
I see fragments of a stone while spring visits Xian Hills
From the pine branches dew drops constantly fall
Could those who mourned for him then be weeping still?

On the strength of Yang Hu's recommendation Du Yu was placed over Xiangyang, with the title General–Conqueror of the South. He was experienced and competent, untiring in study. His favorite book was Zuo Zhuan, or Zuo Qiu-ming's Spring and Autumn Annals, a copy of which was never out of his hand while he was seated or in bed. Whenever he was out riding he would have the book brought before his horse. That was how he came to be known as "Zuo Zhuan mad" among his contemporaries. After taking the Emperor's order Du Yu went to Xiangyang, where he comforted the people and rested the army to prepare for an invasion of Wu.

By this time Wu had lost both Ding Feng and Lu Kang, its two most able generals. The conduct of its ruler became even more atrocious. Every time he gave a banquet to his courtiers he would force them to get quite drunk. He appointed ten eunuchs as agents to observe the faults committed by the guests, and after such a banquet all offenders were punished—some by flaying, others through gouging out the eyes. The people of the country lived in sheer terror.

Wang Jun, Governor of Yizhou, proposed an attack upon Wu in his memorial, which said: “Sun Hao is steeped in vice and should be attacked at once. Should he die and be succeeded by a wise ruler we might find a strong opponent in Wu. Secondly, the ships that I built seven years ago are rotting daily, and it is a waste not to use them. Thirdly, I am seventy years of age and may die any day. If any one of these three events happens, the death of Sun Hao, or the destruction of these ships, or my death, then Wu will be difficult to conquer. I pray Your Majesty not to miss the good opportunity.”

After reading this Sima Yan said to his courtiers, “Wang Jun’s arguments correspond to those of General Yang’s. My mind is made up on the issue.”

But an official named Wang Hun remonstrated: “I hear Sun Hao intends to march north and has his army and equipment in full readiness. It would be hard to confront his troops while their morale is high. Better to wait another year till his army has lost its vigor.”

The Emperor approved and an edict was duly issued to cease war preparations. One day the Emperor was playing a game of wei-chi in his chamber, with Zhang Hua as opponent, when a memorial arrived from Du Yu at the frontier. In short it read:

Formerly Yang Hu confided his plans to Your Majesty alone, but failed to consult the courtiers. That was why most of them were opposed to his view. In every matter we should weigh the pros and cons and in this campaign we are going to benefit tremendously. The worst that can happen is failure. Since last autumn the proposed attack has become known,

and, if we withdraw now, Sun Hao, in his dread, may move his capital to Wuchang, repair his fortifications in various southern cities, and evacuate his people. Then the cities will be hard to destroy, nor will anything be left in the countryside for us to seize as booty. Hence if we wait for another year, our campaign will also fail.

No sooner had the Emperor finished reading than Zhang Hua sprang to his feet, pushed back the chessboard, and said, his hands clasped respectfully before his chest: “Your Majesty is most skilled in war, your state is prosperous, and your people strong. But the ruler of Wu is a tyrant, his people are miserable, and his kingdom weak. Act now and you can easily conquer him. I pray Your Majesty will have no further doubts.”

“Your words are most revealing and I have no more doubts,” said the Emperor.

He at once convened a council at which he issued his commands. Du Yu was appointed commander-in-chief, and was to lead 100,000 men to attack Jiangling. Four other generals, each leading 50,000 men, were to attack the south from four points: Tuzhong, Hengjiang, Wuchang, and Xiakou. All four divisions were under the command of Du Yu. In addition to the land forces, two large fleets, consisting of tens of thousands of warships and boats, were to operate on the river. The land and marine forces numbered more than 200,000. A separate force was sent away to camp at Xiangyang to reinforce various positions.

The ruler of Wu was greatly alarmed at the news. He called quickly his prime minister, Zhang Ti, and two others, He Zhi

and Teng Xun, to discuss how to drive away the enemy. The prime minister proposed sending Wu Yan to meet Du Yu at Jiangling and Sun Xin to Xiakou. He also volunteered to act as military advisor and go with two generals to Niuzhu, ready to lend help to the other forces. Sun Hao approved and the prime minister left with the army.

Sun Hao returned to his chamber looking much worried, for he realized that no preparations had been made against an attack by water. His favorite eunuch Cen Hun asked him why he looked so much in distress and his master told him of his dread of the enemy navy.

"But I have a scheme that will smash all their ships," cried Cen Hun.

"What is it?" asked the Emperor, pleased to hear this.

"We have plenty of iron here. We can weld over a hundred long iron chains with heavy links and stretch them across the river at various points. Also forge many massive iron hammers and arrange them in the stream. When the enemy's ships sail down before the wind they will collide with the hammers and be wrecked. Then how can they sail across?"

Sun Hao was overjoyed to hear this and blacksmiths were soon at work on the riverbank, welding the links and forging the hammers. Work went on day and night, and soon all were in place.

In the meantime, Du Yu marched his army toward Jiangling. He ordered his officer Zhou Zhi to take eight hundred sailors and sail secretly across the Yangtze to attack Yuexiang,

where they were to make a show of flags among trees in the hills. They were to beat drums and explode bombs during the day and raise fires by night. Zhou Zhi took the instruction and stole across the river and hid his men at Ba Hill.

The next day, Du Yu's main body advanced on land and by water. Scouts reported that the Wu forces were coming in three divisions to meet them—Wu Yan on land, Lu Jin with the fleet, and Sun Xin as the van leader. Du Yu pressed forward and soon encountered Sun Xin's ships. Du Yu retreated at once and Sun Xin landed his men and pursued. But before he had gone twenty li a signal bomb sounded and Sun Xin was attacked on all sides. He hastened to pull out, but Du Yu turned back and joined in the attack.

Wu's losses were very heavy, and Sun Xin hastened back. But the eight hundred men of Jin, under Zhou Zhi, mingled with his own, and so also entered the city. They raised a fire on the wall. Sun Xin cried in disbelief, "Could the northern men have flown across the river?"

He made an effort to escape, but Zhou Zhi appeared, and with one savage shout, slew him.

In his ship the Wu commander Lu Jing saw a sea of fires on the south shore and a great standard fluttering in the wind on top of Ba Hill, bearing the name of the Jin general Du Yu. In terror, he tried to escape by land, but soon a Jin officer rode up and he was slain.

At his position in Jiangling, Wu Yan heard of these defeats and knew his position was untenable, so he fled. However, he

was soon captured by soldiers in ambush and led into the presence of Du Yu.

“There is no use sparing you,” said Du Yu, and he ordered the prisoner to be put to death.

Thus Jiangling was seized by the northern army. Soon all the districts along Yuan and Xiang rivers as far as Guangzhou also fell, as the southern commanders yielded their seals of offices at the first summons. Du Yu sent out messengers with a jie (symbol of authority), to soothe the people of the conquered districts and to discipline his troops, who did not in the least harm the local inhabitants. Next Du Yu marched toward Wuchang, and that city also yielded. With this victory the reputation of Du Yu’s army soared.

Du Yu called his officers to a council to discuss plans to seize Jianye.

At the council Hu Fen said, “Enemies of a hundred years cannot be reduced completely in a short time. This is the time of spring flooding of rivers and streams and we will be unable to remain here for long. It’s better to wait until next year to launch another major campaign.”

Du Yu replied, “In the days of old, Yue Yi overcame the mighty Kingdom of Qi in a single battle at Jixi. Our army’s morale is now very high and we can succeed as easily as splitting a bamboo, which breaks all the way down at the touch of a blade after the first few joints have been cut and there was nothing left of it to hold in hand.”

So he sent written commands to his officers at various positions to move in concert against the city of Jianye.

Now the Jin general, Wang Jun, had sailed down the river with his naval force. From his scouts he learned of the iron chains and hammers that had been laid in the river by the men of Wu to hinder his progress. He laughed. Then he had several dozen big rafts constructed and placed on them straw effigies of men in armor and sent them downstream with the current. The men of Wu took them for real soldiers and fled at once. When the rafts reached the hammers they were all lifted out of the stream. Next he put on the rafts huge torches many fathoms long, and more than ten arm-lengths wide, soaked in linseed oil. Whenever a raft was checked by a chain the torch was lit and the chain, exposed to the fire, quickly melted and broke apart. Thus Wang Jun's two squadrons sailed down the Yangtze, conquering wherever they went.

At this time the prime minister of Wu sent two generals, Shen Ying and Zhuge Jing, to try to check the advance of the Jin armies.

Shen Ying said to his colleague, "The forces upstream would be caught unprepared and I reckon the enemies will surely come here. We ought to exert all our strength to counter them. If we can succeed, the safety of our country is assured. But if, unfortunately, we lose the battle, then all is over."

"Your words are only too true, General," agreed his colleague.

Just as they were talking reports came of the approach of their enemies downstream, in irresistible momentum. Alarmed by the news the two officers went to see the prime minister.

“Our country is in peril,” said Zhuge Jing. “Why not escape?”

“The wise as well as the dumb know that the land is doomed,” replied the prime minister, weeping. “But wouldn’t it be a shame if both the Emperor and his officials should yield, without a single person dying for his country?”

Zhuge Jing, also weeping, took his leave. The prime minister and Shen Ying urged their army to fight the invaders, who soon came on all sides, and Zhou Zhi was the first to break into the Wu camp. Zhang Ti, the prime minister, resisted heroically, but was slain in a melee, and Shen Ying was killed by Zhou Zhi. The beaten men of Wu scattered in all directions.

As Du Yu’s banner fluttered on Ba Hill,
Zhang Ti of the south died a loyal death.
The fortune of the kingdom being spent,
He rather chose to die than shame his land.

Having thus conquered Niuzhu, the Jin troops penetrated deeply into the territory of Wu. A messenger was dispatched to Luoyang to tell of the success of the army, and Sima Yan was immensely pleased.

But Jia Chong was opposed to continuing the war and said, “The army has been out fighting for a long time and our soldiers, who are unaccustomed to the alien climate, are

bound to fall sick. It would be well to recall them and plan for further actions later."

Zhang Hua retorted, "The army has penetrated into the very heart of the enemy land. The men of Wu are too frightened to resist us and within a month Sun Hao will be our prisoner. To recall the army now would be to waste the efforts already made. It would indeed be a great pity."

Before the Emperor could respond, Jia Chong turned upon his opponent savagely, "You are wholly ignorant of the time and the geographical conditions and yet you attempt to win glory at the expense of our soldiers' lives. Even your death would not be enough to appease the whole country."

But the Emperor interceded. "This is my idea and Zhang Hua agrees with me. There is no need to argue."

Just at this moment Du Yu's memorial arrived, which also recommended speedy advance. The ruler of Jin, with no more doubts, commanded his army to launch a general offensive against Wu.

The royal mandate duly reached the Jin camps and the army pressed forward by land and water in great pomp. The men of Wu made no defense, but surrendered at the mere sight of Jin flags.

When Sun Hao heard this, he turned pale with fright, and his courtiers said, "What is to be done? Here the northern army comes nearer every day and our men just give in without fighting."

“But why do they not fight?” asked the Emperor.

The courtiers replied, “Today’s calamity is caused by the eunuch Cen Hun. Slay him and we ourselves will go out and fight to the death.”

“How can a eunuch harm a state?” cried the Emperor.

“Have we not seen what Huang Hao did to Shu?” shouted the courtiers in chorus.

Moved by sudden fury, the courtiers rushed into the palace, found the wretched object of their hate and slew him, some even tasting his palpitating flesh.

Then Tao Jun volunteered, “All my warships are small, but give me large vessels and 20,000 men and I can defeat the enemy.”

His request was granted, and the royal guards were placed under Tao Jun’s command to oppose the enemy upstream, while another naval force under Zhang Xiang went downstream. But, contrary to their expectations, a heavy northwesterly wind suddenly came on, blowing the flags lying face down in the ships, and the men would not embark, but fled in all directions. Only Zhang Xiang and a few score of his men remained to face the enemy.

Meanwhile, the Jin general Wang Jun set sail down the river. After passing Three Hills, the sailing master of his squadron appealed to him: “The ships cannot move, for the wind is too strong and the current too swift. Let us wait till the wind has diminished a little.”

But Wang Jun was enraged and, drawing his sword, he cried, "I'm going to capture the Stone City now. How can you talk about stopping?"

So instead of pausing he ordered an advance in full force, accompanied by rolling of drums. Presently Zhang Xiang came to offer surrender.

"If you are sincere in your submission," said Wang Jun. "Lead the way in the attack and win merit for yourself."

Zhang Xiang consented. He returned to his own ship and sailed directly to the capital city, where he had the gates opened and allowed the Jin army to enter.

When the ruler of Wu heard that his enemies had actually entered the city he wished to put an end to his life, but two of his officials said, "Your Majesty, why not imitate Liu Shan, now Duke of Anle?"

Sun Hao took their advice and, following the ritual that befitted a yielding ruler, with hands tied behind his back and a coffin standing beside, he led his courtiers before Wang Jun's army to offer submission. He was graciously received. The general himself loosened his bonds and had the coffin burned. The vanquished ruler was treated with the courtesy due to a prince.

A poet of the Tang Dynasty lamented over this surrender:

As Jin's fabled warships sailed from Yizhou downstream,
Gone sadly were the days of the kingly rule of Jingling.

Thousands of iron chains sank to the bottom of the stream;
A sea of white flags appeared above the Stone City.

Often I think of bygone days and sigh,
Unmoved, the hills still lie beside the cold currents.
While I am homeless on the earth's broad breast,
Where grim old forts stand gray beneath the sky.

So ended Wu's days as an independent kingdom. And the empire of Jin absorbed all its four provinces, forty-three districts, and three hundred and thirteen towns; 523,000 households, 32,000 officials, 230,000 soldiers, and 2,300,000 inhabitants; 2,800,000 measures of grain and over 5,000 ships and boats; and 5,000 or more palace ladies.

Having secured Jin's rule in the south, Wang Jun issued a proclamation to allay the fears of the people and sealed the treasuries and storehouses. By the following day, Tao Jun's force melted away without striking a blow. Then arrived more troops led by the Jin generals Sima Zhou and Wang Rong, who were greatly elated at Wang Jun's success.

The following day Du Yu also arrived and the victory was celebrated with great feasting and rewards for the soldiers. The granaries were opened and grain issued to the people, who were henceforth pacified.

Only one city, Jianping, under Prefect Wu Yan, stood firm against the invaders. Later, however, he also surrendered when he heard of the fall of the Kingdom of Wu.

Wang Jun sent a memorial to report the victory. On receiving the happy tidings of the conquest of the south, the Jin ruler and his courtiers congratulated each other and drank toasts.

At the banquet, the Emperor honored the memory of the late Yang Hu. Raising his wine cup, and in a voice charged with emotions, he said tearfully, “We owe our success today to General Yang. How I regret he is not here to share our rejoicing!”

Sun Xiu, a general of cavalry from Wu, went away from the court and wept, facing the south. “In the old days, our forebear Sun Ce founded this kingdom in his prime, when he was but a lieutenant officer. Now Sun Hao had the heritage of the whole of the south and yet he abandoned it. Alas, ye blue heavens, what manner of man is he?”

In the meantime the victors marched homeward to Luoyang, taking with them the Wu ruler Sun Hao to present him before the Jin emperor. Sun Hao ascended the audience hall and prostrated himself.

The Emperor asked him to take a seat, saying, “I have long prepared this seat for you.”

“Your servant also prepared a seat for Your Majesty in the south,” responded Sun Hao.

The Emperor laughed loudly.

Then Jia Chong turned to Sun Hao and asked, “I have heard that when you were in the south you used to gouge out

people's eyes and flay their faces; what crimes were so punished?"

"Slayers of one's princes were punished in these ways, so were evil and disloyal people."

Jia Chong was silenced, feeling greatly ashamed.

Sun Hao was created Marquis of Guiming and his sons and grandsons received posts in the palace. Noble titles were conferred upon all his former officials who had followed him in surrendering. As the late prime minister of Wu, Zhang Ti, had perished on the field, his descendants received similar titles. The victorious general Wang Jun was rewarded with the title, General–Pillar of the State. And the other officers also received rewards and ranks.

So ended the division of the land into three kingdoms, which were reunited into one empire under the rule of Sima Yan of the Jin Dynasty. That is what is meant by "Unity succeeds division and division follows unity. One is bound to be replaced by the other after a long span of time. This is the way of things in the world."

The last emperors of the three kingdoms in time all died natural deaths: Liu Shan of Shu died in the seventh year of the Jin reign period Tai Shi (A.D. 271); Cao Huan of Wei, in the first year of Tai An (A.D. 302); and Sun Hao of Wu, in the fourth year of Tai Kang (A.D. 283).

A poet has summarized the history of these troubled years in the poem below:

It was the dawning of a glorious day
When Liu Bang entered Xianyang, sword in hand.
Then Guang-Wu the imperial rule was restored
Like a golden bird soaring to the sky.
Alas, Prince Xian succeeded in full time
And saw the setting of the sun of power!
He Jin, the tactless, fell beneath the blows
Of palace minions. Dong Zhuo the tyrant
Then ruled the court. And Wang Yun devised
A plan and triumphed in slaying the rebel.
But Li and Guo lit up the flame of war
And brigands swarmed like ants through all the land.
Then rose ambitious lords from every side.
The Suns carved out their land east of the Yangtze;
The Yuans strove to make Henan their own.
Liu Yan and son seized the west of Ba and Shu;
His kinsman Liu Biao laid hold of Jing and Xiang.
Zhang Yan and Zhang Lu in turn held Nanzheng by force;
Ma Teng and Han Sui defended Xiliang,
Each of three others seized upon a fief.
Tao Qian, Zhang Xiu, and Gongsun Zan, the bold.
But above all Cao Cao the strong
Became prime minister, and to his side,
Drew many able men. He swayed the court
And held all the feudal lords in his hand;
By force of arms he controlled the north
Against all rivals. Of imperial stock
Was born Liu Bei, who with sworn brothers two
Pledged an oath that the Hans should be restored.
He wandered homeless east and west for years,
With few officers and a meager force.
How sincere were his three visits to Nanyang,
To see the Sleeping Dragon, who foretold

The split of the empire into three states.
“Take Jingzhou first and then Shu,” he advised,
“A fitting base to build an empire on.”
Alas! Liu ruled there only three short years,
Sadly he left his son to Kongming’s care.
To reunite the empire under Han
Six times Kongming led his men to Qishan,
But the days of Han had come to an end.
One midnight his star fell into the vale.
Jiang Wei struggled alone with all his might
But his nine efforts against the north were in vain.
Zhong Hui and Deng Ai advanced by two routes
And thus fell Han’s last stronghold to Wei.
Five sons of Cao sat on the dragon throne,
Soon Sima snatched the scepter from Cao Huan.
Before the Altar of Abdication mist rose;
Beneath the Stone City no waves lapped.
The former rulers of Wei, Shu, and Wu
Became Dukes Chenliu, Guiming, and Anle.
All down the ages rings the note of change,
For fate so rules it—none escapes its sway.
The kingdoms three have vanished as a dream,
Pondering o’er this we can only grieve.

Footnote

* The ancient Chinese measured time by a sixty-year cycle. The year of geng-zi is the thirty-seventh year in the cycle. This is the year A.D. 280 by the western calendar.

About the Authors

Ron Iverson first visited China in 1984 as the personal representative of the Mayor of Chicago as part of a Sister Cities program. For the past 30 years he has continued to regularly visit China and has founded joint business ventures with Chinese partners and taught Business Strategy at Tongji University in Shanghai. He also personally arranged the first ever exhibition of Forbidden City artifacts from the palace Museum in Beijing to tour the US.

Early in his visits to China, Iverson discovered The Three Kingdoms and came to realize the enormous cultural significance the Chinese people place in the book. Believing that one needed to be familiar with the principles revealed in the book in order to find business or political success in China, and being dissatisfied with existing translations, Iverson decided to fund and edit a new translation aimed towards delivering the thrill of a contemporary novel while imparting understanding of a key aspect of Chinese culture.

Yu Sumei is a professor of English at East China Normal University. She has translated several English language books into Chinese and is the first native Chinese speaker to translate The Three Kingdoms into English. She invested a total of two years into working on this new translation of The Three Kingdoms, spending the time on sabbatical in New York with her daughter, who typed the translation out as she completed it.

The Tuttle Story
"Books to Span the East and West"

Many people are surprised when they learn that the world's largest publisher of books on Asia had its humble beginnings in the tiny American state of Vermont. The company's founder, Charles Tuttle, came from a New England family steeped in publishing, and his first love was books—especially old and rare editions.

Tuttle's father was a noted antiquarian dealer in Rutland, Vermont. Young Charles honed his knowledge of the trade working in the family bookstore, and later in the rare books section of Columbia University Library. His passion for beautiful books—old and new—never wavered throughout his long career as a bookseller and publisher.

After graduating from Harvard, Tuttle enlisted in the military and in 1945 was sent to Tokyo to work on General Douglas MacArthur's staff. He was tasked with helping to revive the Japanese publishing industry, which had been utterly devastated by the war. When his tour of duty was completed, he left the military, married a talented and beautiful singer, Reiko Chiba, and in 1948 began several successful business ventures.

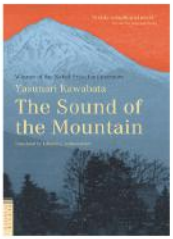
To his astonishment, Tuttle discovered that postwar Tokyo was actually a book-lover's paradise. He befriended dealers in the Kanda district and began supplying rare Japanese editions to American libraries. He also imported American books to sell to the thousands of GIs stationed in Japan. By 1949, Tuttle's business was thriving, and he opened Tokyo's very

first English-language bookstore in the Takashimaya Department Store in Ginza, to great success. Two years later, he began publishing books to fulfill the growing interest of foreigners in all things Asian.

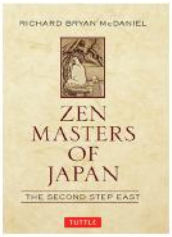
Though a westerner, Tuttle was hugely instrumental in bringing a knowledge of Japan and Asia to a world hungry for information about the East. By the time of his death in 1993, he had published over 6,000 books on Asian culture, history and art—a legacy honored by Emperor Hirohito in 1983 with the "Order of the Sacred Treasure," the highest honor Japan can bestow upon non-Japanese.

The Tuttle company today maintains an active backlist of some 1,500 titles, many of which have been continuously in print since the 1950s and 1960s—a great testament to Charles Tuttle's skill as a publisher. More than 60 years after its founding, Tuttle Publishing is more active today than at any time in its history, still inspired by Charles Tuttle's core mission—to publish fine books to span the East and West and provide a greater understanding of each.

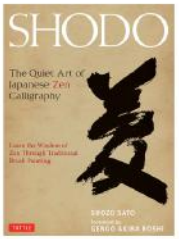
Other Ebooks Available



ISBN: 978-1-4629-1238-4

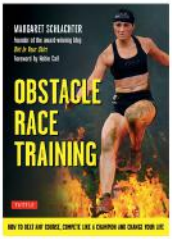


ISBN: 978-1-4629-1050-2



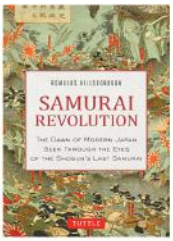
ISBN: 978-1-4629-1188-2

ISBN: 978-1-4629-1426-5

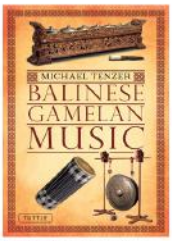


ISBN: 978-1-4629-1414-2

ISBN: 978-1-4629-0937-7



ISBN: 978-1-4629-1351-0



ISBN: 978-1-4629-0870-7

ISBN: 978-1-4629-1344-2

"*The Three Kingdoms* is considered the ultimate book on strategy, offering keen insights into Chinese culture. Ron Iverson's effort is a great contribution to the understanding of Chinese culture and history."

–Xinmin Wang, former Consul for Cultural Affairs for the PRC and advisor to the President of China

"This translation faithfully conveys a native Chinese-speaking person's understanding of this most influential and famous Chinese book. To translate this Chinese classic into modern English is a challenging and difficult job for any language translator. However, this joint effort by Yu Sumei and Ronald Iverson has met the challenge."

–Hua Xin, former advisor and translator for IBM China

The Three Kingdoms is an epic saga of loyalty and treachery, brotherhood and rivalry—and the deeds of legendary heroes and villains during one of the most tumultuous periods in Chinese history.

Considered the greatest of the "Four Great Classics" of Chinese literature, *The Three Kingdoms* is still read by millions in China and throughout Asia. In addition to being considered a great work of literature, many Chinese read it as a guide to success in life and business and many foreigners read it to better understand the core attributes that make up Chinese society.

The story of the struggles of Liu Bei and his allies against the treacherous attempts of Cao Cao to steal away the throne as the Han Dynasty comes to a close has captivated readers for centuries. This dynamic new translation will appeal to modern readers who find the twists and turns of *Game of Thrones* so compelling.

This third volume concludes the tale of Liu Bei and his sworn brothers-in-arms Zhang Fei and Guan Yu, whose loyalty and fidelity are sorely tested in a society which is in flux and at war for its very survival.

TUTTLE

www.tuttlepublishing.com

Printed in Singapore

ISBN 978-1-4629-1439-5

52495

9 781462 914395 US $24.95